

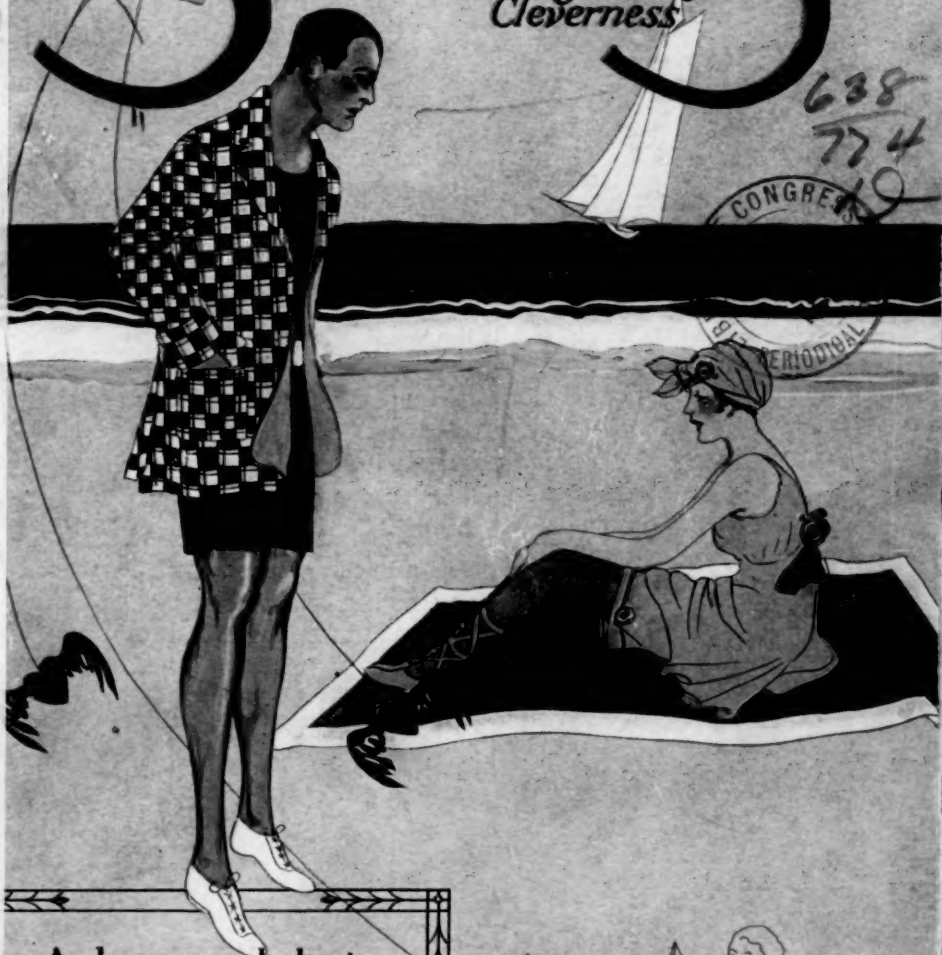
THE ART OF THE WIFE," by Lilith Benda--A COMPLETE NOVELET

AUG 14 1916

The<sup>2</sup>

# SMART SET

*A Magazine of  
Cleverness*

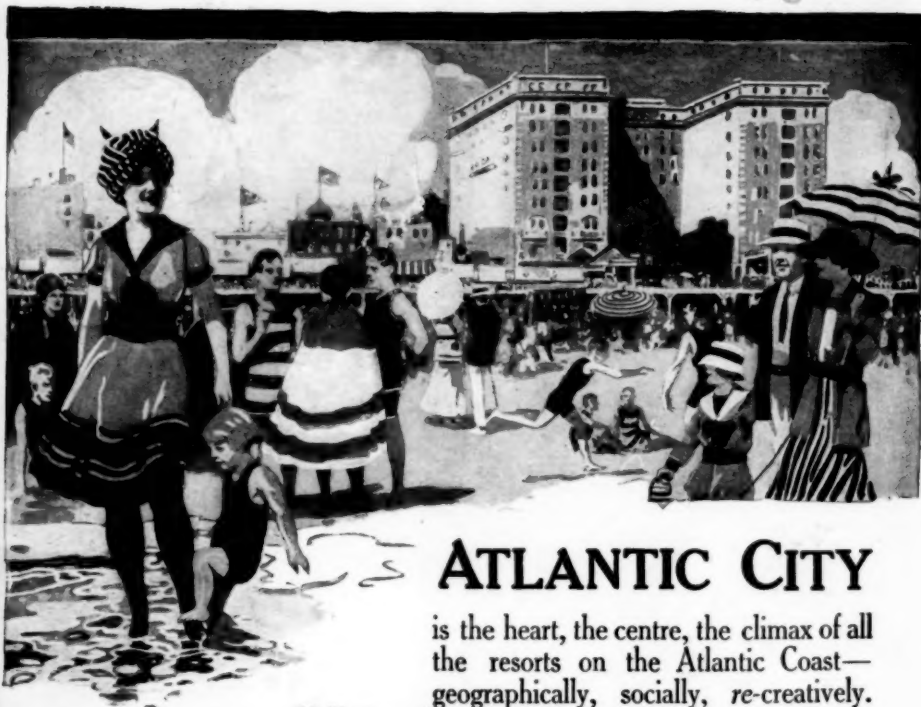


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Vol. L

SEPTEMBER, 1916

No. 1

# The SMART SET

Edited by

George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken

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AND

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AUG 14 1916

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Vol. L

SEPTEMBER, 1916

No. 1

# The SMART SET

*The Magazine of the Promenade Deck*

## SOMETHING WORTH TELLING

By Douglas Turney

HE was pleased with her beauty and her gracefulness, and he exerted himself to please her.

He was versatile of mind and tongue, and he talked to her of the symbolism of Paul Verlaine and of the cymbalism of Robert W. Service; of the majesty of Milton and of the mush of Edwin Markham; of the sagacity of Shakespeare and of the droolings of The Duchess; of the music of Schumann and of the things which bear the name of Irving Berlin; of Raphael's grandiosities in the Vatican and of the futurists' curiosities in the present; of Rodin's marble regalities and of the cuteness of the Kewpies; of God and of the Holy Rollers; of dramatists, such as Ibsen and Dunsany, and of the Americans, such as Thomas and Broadhurst; of the dramatic criticism of William Hazlitt and of the pious pish of William Winter; of poets and of Alfred W. Noyes and other noises; of the reviews of George Brandes and of what is printed about books in the *Literary Digest*; of the

patriotism of Lincoln and of the cohanism of men who doff their hats at the national colors on barber poles; of Nature and of the people who say, "Ain't Nature wonderful!"

And he bored her.

She showed no interest whatever.

Contrarily, she displayed a desire for a change.

And finally—

She yawned.

And she didn't try to hide it.

Then he realized that she cared for neither one nor the other of the many extremes he had brought forth for her.

He was bewildered.

She smiled, exhibiting white, but sharp teeth.

"And now," she said, frankly, cruelly, "you must tell me something interesting—something really worth telling and re-telling."

"And what shall it be?" he asked, still avid to please her.

"Something you promised on your honor not to tell," she answered.

# LEGS

By Morris Gilbert

**P**RACTICABLE, bevelled, spatulate, void, generous, burgeoning, flamboyant, sympathetic, Alpine, astounding, Brobdingnagian, majestic bountiful, forensic, outward-bound, lavish, peripheried, parenthetical, pyramidal, overflowing, turned, corniced, lathed, planed, plain, plastic, inverted, diverting, questionable.

August, robust, Amazonian, brawny, hearty, imposing, posing, comfortable, saucy, singular, billowy, Sir Willoughby Patterne's, pompous, cornered, extravagant frog. . . .

Languishing, *chétif*, stringy, mean, vascular, adventitious, hollow, Gothic-arched, shaky, gaunt, viscous, vagarious, meticulous, non-skid, submerged, depressing, beaming, exposed, over-

exposed, scrawny, delusive, lean, clavi-chord, historic, straw, funnel, aggressive, crass, cotton, blue, black, gouty, candid, frustrate, ænemic, vapid, haughtiness, emotional, restrained, durable, Sheraton, foolish, wan. . . .

Abracadabra, gay, svelte, insidious, sophisticated, alluring, Lorelei, chicken, dative, slender, magnetic, Coney, bizarre, Oriental, ormolu, dainty, frank, gauche, winsome, piquant, high voltage, sinuous, Saturnalian, bewitching, dimpled, flaunting, friendly, unconscious, conscious, haughty, unbending, silk, golden, ivory, Parisian, lissome, delicate, lovely, burnished, vivid, Ziegfeld, mahogany, dusky, delirious, Bacchanalian, frivolous, young, alabaster, vibrant, whoopee, Ann Pennington's, yours, mine. . . .



# NINA

By Muna Lee

**S**HE lives in St. Francis,  
She is like a nun.  
Her cheeks are pale as a white, white rose,  
Her lips are sweet as one.

If I lived in St. Francis,  
I'd take a painting brush  
And paint upon her rose white cheek  
A little pink rose flush.

If I lived in St. Francis,  
For all she's like a nun,  
I'd kiss her lips to the red of a rose  
That have the sweet of one.



**N**O man ever convinced a woman of anything. But now and then a man is lucky enough to be present when a woman changes her mind.

## THE ART OF THE WIFE

By Lilith Benda

**T**HROUGH the lobby of Carnegie Hall a typical symphony audience was moving haltingly into the balminess of a spring night. The last concert of the season was over, and with the crashing C major chords of the Fifth Symphony just done, the crowd made its laborious progress to the street. It was, as always, overwhelmingly feminine, and the occasional black hats of the men stood out like raisins in some huge and incredibly gaudy cake. One knows those symphony men—the small guard of exotic enthusiasts, humming vaguely under their breaths; the larger, but still modest, cohort of martyrs, bored in countenance and muttering vague urbanities to their companions in amazingly variegated skirts. And the women—either too lean or too bulky, too florid or too sallow, overdressed or dowdy—sad, middle-aged school teachers; thin shrews in gold-rimmed spectacles; patrons of new movements in the arts; fat, romantic mothers of families; flappers from the finishing schools; dreamy mental mistresses of Chopin, Wagner, even Bach; fashionables of an intellectual aspiration; makers of bad fiddle music, torturers of grand pianos, harpists, singers; the æsthetic brigade of revolt.

"Look at them, Suzanne! A delegation from the ranks of the Society for the Propagation of Celibacy in the Male! What could be more depressing than such frumps? And the men who love them, and become husbands to them! Imagine the next generation!"

Joan Renwick lifted her blonde head in disdain, and turned upon her

daughter a smile in whose radiance there always lurked a trace of mockery. More than one masculine eye alighted in furtive admiration upon these two. They stood apart from the crowd in the delectability of intellectual and sartorial elegance. Susanne clutched her mother's arm.

"Father at his groggiest wouldn't give a glance to any of these, would he, mother dear?"

The little, flute-like voice followed Mrs. Renwick's smooth contralto in congruity with the contrast between the well-tempered opulence of the mother and the daughter's diminutive charm. Suzanne reached only to Joan's shoulder. Her blue eyes and parted lips gave to her round face an expression of infantile bewilderment, and, enhanced by the yellow curls escaping at forehead and temples, it made her look even younger than her eighteen years. In like manner the mother's smooth skin, unshamed for wrinkles, refused to tally with the forty years she admitted without a sigh. Sighs, indeed, were failings regularly excluded from that part of the Renwick *ménage* which, represented by these two, constituted its feminine element.

At the age when little girls are ordinarily being drilled to obey their elders, honor their parents, and love their God, Joan Renwick began her daughter's education with admonishments, in the rich contralto never known to rise in indignation or protest, that tears and scenes and sighs were unheard of between ladies and gentlemen, that dainty raiment and a low voice were the essentials always to be striven for, that slang and swearing were the inalienable

privileges of folk who spoke a pure French and a sound German, that gentlemen were more interesting than ladies, and that any laxity compatible with the dictums of good breeding was but a venial transgression, completely to be overlooked by the admonitory eye.

At the age of eight, Suzanne had already attained an advanced stage of her education, for she then learnt that certain things called *sprees* were part of every gentleman's existence, and particularly in the case of that gentleman who was associated in her consciousness with long hugs, and with the sweet content of hours spent upon his knee, her little face buried in a flowing beard that exhaled the aroma, vague and pleasing, she had come, as her perceptions quickened, mentally to designate "Father's groggy whiff." She had discovered, too, that there were two kinds of *sprees*, the one wherein the gentleman came home at dawn, to be assisted up the stairs by a golden-haired lady whose laugh became softer and cold eyes gentler at such moments, and the other, the more pleasurable sort, when this gentleman, customarily silent and reserved, who spent his days furthering the lucrative powers of silk mills, and his evenings browsing over symphony scores with some of his gray-haired friends, sat late into the night, with the golden-haired lady beside him and a breathless little girl on his knee, sat filling and re-filling his glass, sat singing and shouting to their eyes' adulatory applause.

She had been a silent, wide-eyed little girl who pored for hours among bookshelves whose contents were in no wise denied her; who cared little for companions of her own age, and preferred to sit in a corner among grown people, drinking in conversations untempered to meet her young ears. And now, at eighteen, she remained very much the same silent, wide-eyed little girl. Her parents had sent her, under the eye of a governess, for a year in Europe. Since her return some six months before, two significant stages

in her development had accomplished themselves. Now her French and German vied worthily with her parents' and now she joined her mother, on the nights of her father's bacchanals, in aiding his recalcitrant legs up the stairway. Otherwise she was still the same shy little creature, poring over her books, listening from her corner, gazing askance at the few young men she happened to meet.

Mrs. Renwick, for all her manifest qualifications for the part, was no figure in fashionable circles. The Renwick coterie was limited to small groups of men who came almost nightly to the house in East Sixty-fourth Street. Its *chatelaine* had no women friends, no fads, no pursuits, few amusements. She managed her home with exquisite accomplishment; revealed herself always perfectly groomed and charming, exhalant of poise and energy, and smiling her radiant, chilly smile. It played lightly upon her lips now, while, with her daughter, she scanned the crowd.

"There he is now, mother!" Suzanne glimpsed her father, and broke into a soft laugh.

Will Renwick's huge frame loomed above the surrounding crowd. Against his pallor, the blackness of his eyes and beard lent his face an arresting quality. His measured steps gave him an effect of restraint; they dragged slightly, too, at one with a certain droop to the man, a certain listlessness, as if in the past he had been cowed into inertia. As he made his way toward them, Suzanne's glance wavered between him and the figure of a tall, dark young man at his side.

"Wallie!" The girl started in surprise at the unquestionable delight in her mother's cry. "Wallie, by all that's entirely agreeable!"

"Hello, Joan." He hurried across the lobby, his teeth flashing with pleasure. Mrs. Renwick moved a little out of her corner to meet him. In their handclasp, energetic and prolonged, there displayed itself such spontaneous enjoyment that Suzanne turned, in

faint wonderment, toward her father, who, however was beaming too.

"How we've missed you, Wallie!"—the contralto pursued. "It was a long eight months. . . . Everything go smoothly out West?"

He answered with a brusque intensity, as if in haste to proceed toward some indefinite goal that beckoned.

"Made the fogies come around to my way of thinking in the end, though. I tell you, this milk chocolate concern's going to be a big thing! Only got back to-day. Running out to Jersey to look the factory over to-morrow. . . . Where've you been this evening?"

"Theatre."

"Why? Devilish good program here."

"Bach, Brahms, and Beethoven!" Mrs. Renwick's smile became more expansive. "Every time I hear them I remember how dreary they seemed when I was eighteen. So I couldn't inflict them upon Suzanne. We sat through two acts of a farce, and stopped to pick Will up."

"So you're Suzanne? Will, in his cups, boasts about you, young woman, to a boresome degree." He bestowed upon the girl a quick, unconcerned glance, and turned again to the mother. "You look stunning to-night, Joan."

Suzanne continued to survey him, her eyes widening each instant in a sort of happy mystification. Almost as tall as her father, but wirier, slighter, there was that in his tawny face and bright dark eyes to entrap the sensibilities even of a subdued and shrinking maid. She seemed not to hear the badinage that passed between him and her mother, although at his "I must be off," her lips drooped slightly, and when Mrs. Renwick put in a "You'll dine with us to-morrow?" they parted, to break, with his quick assent, into a tremulous smile.

It was a short walk to the Renwick home. Her littleness accentuated by the parents who towered above her on either side, Suzanne had to patter along at her speediest to keep up with their quick, long steps. The look of wonder

remained on her face. All three were silent for some minutes. Finally a low laugh aroused her from her absorption; her mother was contemplating her in good humoured derision.

"His name's Wallace Latimer, pet. He's an interesting youngster, wrapt up in the development of some sort of milk chocolate factory. He says it will make him rich. While you were abroad, he drifted in and became a fixture. He's been out West of late, looking for cattle pastures, or some such thing. It doesn't particularly interest me. What does is his romantic streak. I've a maternal concern for him. His aspirations are so gigantic. There are smash-ups ahead for him, and—"

Her husband's deep, droning voice interrupted: "You're wrong there, Joan. That boy will succeed. It won't be as with me and my silk-mills."

"Your silk-mills succeeded, didn't they, father?" Suzanne put in gently, "You've lots of money. What more could one wish?" And when a quick frown from her mother formed the only reply vouchsafed by either, she went on with unusual loquacity: "You've a maternal concern for him, Mother? Do you know, I don't think his interest in you is quite—well, filial? I think he seemed a good bit taken."

At this her father laughed. "Joan's his unfulfilled romance, Suzanne."

"Joan's his woman-of-thirty, pet," that lady added. "Every boy of twenty-four has a woman of thirty to woo boldly, openly, in the face of her respected husband. But in the end he always shudders, if ever she falls in with his crazy proposals. I find the past flattering; it's not every woman who can play the women-of-thirty part, at forty-one—and to such a youth! Unfulfilled romances are pleasant affairs, Suzanne. You'll have lots of them in your day."

Suzanne bestowed upon the matter a moment's reflection. "I—I think," she ventured ultimately, "I think I'd rather be a fulfilled romance every time."

Will Renwick chuckled, and squeezed



his daughter's arm, "Our fledgling here is making ready to fly, Joan."

"And we sha'n't bind her wings. . . . Stand ready, simply, with the balm and the bandages."

Another wordless interval brought them before a flower shop with a display of lilies-of-the-valley in its window. Suzanne halted to breathe the faint fragrance wafted through the open door. Her mother nodded knowingly.

"Of course it entralls you, pet. At eighteen the scent of lilies blends itself with thoughts of the mysteries of love."

"You're quite mistaken, Mother. It doesn't suggest the mysteries of love at all."

"What does, Suzanne?" Through the mazes of his beard Renwick's deep voice resounded.

"Your groggy whiff, dear."

Renwick laughed and he and Joan exchanged glances.

"So much for the joy of life," he said. "So much for youth. In Wallie it's that chocolate factory. And here it's your shindies. . . . Sometimes it worries me."

"As for Latimer,"—behind the tone there lurked now a curious hollowness,—"don't worry about him. If callow enthusiasm and an aggressive chin have translated themselves in one instance into mediocrity, and a taste for the vintner's output, and a flowing beard to hide the sunken chin, it was due to a streak of alloy that's not in that youngster. As for Suzanne—"

He let the words hang in the air. Another quiet interlude brought them to their doorway. They were standing in the vestibule when Mrs. Renwick laughed out a kindly taunt into her daughter's rapt face.

"Good looking, this Latimer, isn't he?"

Suzanne met the raillery without discomfiture.

"I find him so," she concurred gravely.

Once in the hallway, Renwick lifted his great arms, and let them fall with emphasis at his side.

"Bach, Brahms, and Beethoven," he proclaimed. "A trio to be heard in cold sober fealty, and to be paid the tribute of a subsequent drink! Come along, girls! To-night I imbibe the flower of Charente."

Immediately there leapt into the older woman's eyes a vibrant look that overspread itself a little more slowly than was usual, a little less spontaneously, over the daughter's face. They followed him into the dining-room. Suzanne fetched a bottle, the contents of which were never demeaned by transference into a decanter, and placed it, with a glass, before him. Watching him empty the glass at a swallow, and refill it with steady hand, she poised herself upon his knee, but with a preoccupied air, as if unable to liberate her thoughts from some hitherto unexplored cul-de-sac of the imagination wherein they were hemmed. At length her mother aroused her.

"Wallie, by the way, dear, is the boon companion of your father's,—how shall I put it?—acute sprees."

"Really?" The curly head upraised itself in interest. "Then—then he must know Priscilla. Does he, Father?"

Renwick emptied his second glass before turning to his wife in puzzled inquiry. "Who the devil's Priscilla, Joan?"

"It happens," she explained, "that when we were hoisting you upstairs the last time, you sang the praises of a certain Dulcinea—a certain Priscilla with eyes like—what was it, Suzanne?"

The girl's light treble resounded softly, "Priscilla with the eyes of a shy gazelle, who breathes out obscenities like a maiden her prayers," she expounded.

A flash of recognition lighted up Renwick's face. "Oh, Priscilla!" he said. "Priscilla to be sure! A vampire, my dear. A faithless and terrible creature!"

"And does he know her? Does Wallie know her?" Suzanne pursued. "And does he like her?"

A ruddiness was creeping over the pallid face. He waved a shaky finger

reprovingly. "Latimer, my child, was the crafty knave who stole her away."

"Ah. Then you see!" she commented, looking up at her mother, "not all of his romances have been unfulfilled."

After that she grew pensive again, her head lowered in meditation. Several minutes went by before a hesitant smile began to tremble at her lips. She flushed rosy, buried her face in her father's beard, and presently, blurred and scarce audible, sent an eager little query from its depths:

"Is Priscilla prettier than I?"

Renwick grunted; lifted her head; framed her face in his huge hands; caught her close, and held her so for a while; answered at last with a certain huskiness:

"Not a dewy-lipped daughter of delight living with your eyes and hair, my little Suzanne. . . . I drink to them!"

At that an unfamiliar sound filled the room, a sound full of tinkles, and trills, and gladness. The shy girl who rarely smiled, rarely laughed, was sending from her throat peal after peal. Springing to her feet after a while, "Dear things," she chuckled, "I'm afraid you'll have to spree without me to-night. I'm awfully sleepy, and I think I'll go to bed." For an instant she nestled close to her father, her arms flung about his neck. Then turning to the parent toward whom such demonstrations seemed somehow unsuitable, she bestowed a light kiss upon Mrs. Renwick's smooth cheek, tripped off into the hall, and up the staircase, and into her own unlighted room. There, in the darkness, she found her way to the window. With her nose flattened against the pane, she stared unseeing, into the street below. . . .

Meanwhile the two in the dining-room exchanged significant looks. "A memorable event, Joan. The first time our offspring has failed to bask in delight upon my knee while I imbibed."

His wife laid a hand lightly upon him. "It's only what I was noticing before. Youth is having its way. She

is intoxicated with existence. She's full of the promise of it to-night, and wants to think it all out alone. It's Wallie, of course. Her training has given her certain tastes, certain niceties, which make him the first altogether possible youth she's met,—and naturally she fell bang in love at the first glimpse of him. . . . It's rather too bad, though. They're far too young for marriage, and that's what it's tending to."

"You don't think,"—he set a full glass upon the table, and spoke gravely, "You don't think Latimer is not to be trusted? He's pretty much of a rake, while she——"

"Heavens, no!" she reassured him. "He's a rake, but there's no more naïf creature in the world than a rake. If I had my choice between putting my daughter in a rake's or an evangelist's hands, I wouldn't hesitate a moment."

"I rely on your judgment." He raised his glass, while upon his face a mellow contentment supplanted the worried look. "Fair lady, I drink to your eyes,—the loveliest, chilliest, wisest, kindest eyes that ever held a man for a lifetime beneath their dispassion-spell! I am about to see them twinkle, for I am about to narrate an incident so gargantuan in its grossness, so succulent, so exquisite, in its. . . ."

Through the halls the big voice boomed. And above them, Suzanne still stood with her nose flattened against the windowpane, staring thoughtfully into the street below.

## II

UPON the face the beatific glow of one conscious that all is gratifyingly as it should be, of one who has reverently performed a ceremonial with whose augustness no such vapid word as "toilette" may be made to tally, of one abask in the strange, stirring satisfaction of having prepared herself fitly for the delectation of a young man about every thought of whom there hovered a something impalpable, lustrous, and roseate to an exhilarating

degree, Suzanne stood, the following afternoon, in the varicolored luminosity of a setting sun, and stared at her mirrored reflection. In a shell-pink frock fashioned on Marguerite lines, the blonde hair parted and coiled at the nape of a long, white neck, her exacting eyes saw revealed in the mirror not the slightest flaw. For some minutes she continued to stare, then heaved a great, glad sigh, and turned to the door.

The Renwicks dined early. Always in the late afternoon their guests assembled for an hour's relaxing conversation in the firelight before dinner. Up through the halls there floated a blurred murmur, — now the low, weighted utterances of the greyheads who pondered over their symphony scores, now Joan Renwick's bantering laugh, and then a voice brusque and penetrant, at whose sound the girl stopped short on the stairway, and in excitement clasped her little hands. After a moment she went on slowly, lingering at each step, with faint smiles chasing each other over her face. It was a full five minutes before she reached the first landing, but once there, with a quick intake of breath she appeared to throw off her hesitancy, fluttered without a sound down the remaining flight, stood for an instant unobserved. Before her was Wallace Latimer, leaning, all interest and admiration, over her mother's chair.

He looked handsomer even than on the day before. Emphasized in silhouette against the firelight, the square shoulders, narrow hips, clean cut profile, the length and leanness of him became part of a fine quality of arrogance he exhaled, which seemed to recognize only with contempt any obstacle before him on the all-conquering path he meant to travel. . . . Mrs. Renwick, too, was at her best. Well draped black velvet enhanced the allure of her rounded slenderness, and gave to the whiteness of her arms and neck an almost startling effect. The yellow hair was coiled higher even than was usual; the blue eyes seemed chillier and brighter, the mocking smile at

once more mocking and kindlier.

"You're a fine figure of a woman, Joan Renwick." There was fervor in the curt words.

Upstairs the mirror had convincingly proclaimed someone else a fine figure of a woman, too. Catching her breath as in anticipatory delight of eliciting more such approval, the girl in the doorway advanced timidly into the room.

A moment later she sat in her customary corner, in her customary low chair, quite decidedly unheeded, and out of it all, digging her nails deep into her palms, blinking sternly to counterweight the force of certain tabooed things called tears that sought, with bewildering persistency, to brim her eyes. . . . He had barely noticed her. A perfunctory "How are you, Miss Renwick?" spoken in the laughing tone of people who find it amusing to employ the formalities toward children, comprised all the attention he bestowed upon her. All the resplendence of the shell-pink frock, all the invitation of wide-open eyes and eager lips had inspired only nonchalant unconcern. And into her corner she shrank, while the two went on talking as all her life people had gone on talking when she was among them,—quite as if she were not there.

"A fine figure of a woman, Joan Renwick," he repeated, with the same note of unqualified approbation.

The lady in question shrugged her beautiful shoulders, and laughed. "You're a persistent admirer, Wallie,—persistent, but not importunate, and therefore delightful. You always make me feel kind-hearted, and benevolent, and altruistic, and that sort of thing. The suitor of twenty-four, you see, fits in smoothly with an impeccable wife's scheme of existence,—especially if she is past forty."

"How's that?"

"Can't say exactly. But at forty-one, one likes being amused, while so few things seem genuinely amusing. And it fosters a positively benign feeling to think that I am depriving my-

self of exceptional amusement by keeping from your face the look of awful, awful misery and consternation I know would come creeping there if ever I fell in with your tune."

"As for that," he answered readily, "you wouldn't be at all amused. You'd pretend to be, so as to conceal a dreary conviction that at last you were getting old. And it doesn't alter the fact that beautiful women have no right to be impeccable wives. It's rank injustice—"

"To young men?"

"Good Lord, no! To their husbands. Though she outvenues Venus, the woman altogether moral in the accepted sense of the word, remains the woman altogether dull. Goodness has its uses: it's better than the costliest cosmetic for snub noses and sallow skins. But a beautiful woman of too exemplary conduct is as demoralizing to a man as a would-be naughty lady with a hare-lip. We men seek beautiful women because, be they ever so stupid, or mean, or tricky, in the main they are not altogether prudish—in the main, they are not altogether dull. And this morality stuff is the craftiest foe beauty has. It must have been an awful awakening for poor old Will in there, for instance, when he discovered your subjection to Grundy."

She frowned at this, and made no reply. Advancing closer, the boy began to tap impatiently on the back of her chair. After a pause, she lifted a long, white hand, and rested it lightly upon his. Suzanne, all attention now, leaned a little out of her corner, with wide-open eyes in which there remained no trace of the unshed tears.

Her mother spoke finally. "You're rather a lovable youngster, Wallie. A worldly-wise, matter-of-fact, well-groomed, good-looking philanderer at twenty-four, who distributes his time evenly between his book-shelves, his symphony concerts, his milk chocolate factory, and his sprees with my well-beloved spouse." She looked up at him for an instant, and shook her head. "Do you know what your future will

be? You'll make a lot of money, marry some ravishing miss with a warm, pure heart, turn out a paterfamilias—and how your views about exemplary wifehood will change!"

"Will they now?" His blunt laugh rang out, as with an air of proprietorship he squeezed the hand surrendered him. "What you say is all very well, and may come to pass for all I know or care, but, no matter how comely this wife of mine may be, no matter how contented I may become, I'll still maintain to the beautiful wives of other men that a beautiful wife has no right to be impeccable."

"And for all your dashing Lothario methods," she rejoined serenely, "among the few women who love their husbands, you'll find, dear fellow, together with a misleading tendency to guzzle admiration, a firm intention of wallowing indefinitely in the slough of impeccability."

His only reply was to drop her hand, and turn impatiently away. Suzanne leaned a little further out of her corner, her shining eyes following his every movement with an intensity in their depths that foretold a forthcoming attack upon the insensibility that had relegated her to obscurity. Again her mother shrugged her shoulders and laughed.

"And now that we've threshed that topic pretty thoroughly, tell me, Wallie, how goes the chocolate factory?"

With the question a marked change took place in the youth. A moment before he had appeared engrossed, a captive under the spell of chilly blue eyes and matured fascinations. Now, of a sudden, it was as if for him the charming Mrs. Renwick no longer existed. All the self-assurance that had been revealed indefinitely behind his air of unconcern surged forth now in its full potency. The jaw assumed a more aggressive line; the lips contracted; from the dark eyes there shot a hard light of determination. He had been leaning lazily over her chair. Now he straightened himself to his full height



as if in readiness for battle against some vast, formidable force, and very sure of himself. When he spoke it was loudly, with a sharp energy, with an ardor, a ruthlessness and strength that caused Joan to lift her eyebrows in faint astonishment and the droning voices in the next room to sink, as the greyheads lifted their faces and listened. And with their appeal to hero-worshipping girlhood, his words served to draw Suzanne out of her obscurity. She sat up very straight in her chair, craned her little neck toward him, drank in his eloquence with tremulous lips.

"The chocolate factory, Joan, begins to flourish, and will go on flourishing, and is bound to go on flourishing—simply because I choose to have it so. I've startled the fogies who've had it in charge. I've made 'em stir out of their silly old torpor, and blink their silly old eyes. New methods, new machinery, advertisement, progress, cold calculation, and down with the fossils! That's what I stand for,—efficiency for all it's worth! I'm getting control of the factory, and I'm going to get control of the company, and within a few years I mean to control the whole damned milk chocolate industry! Be square with the under-dog, but go for the man higher up, make an under-dog out of him, and always beware that no one makes an under-dog out of you. There you have it,—my doctrine, my creed, my philosophy! And it's a devilish sound doctrine, too. The definite tangible thing that you can hold in the palm of your hand,—that's what I live for. And why not? There's an anti-climax to everything else, like a hang-over. The most exquisite strain of music doesn't ultimately comfort, doesn't ultimately delight,—begets only imbecile hankerings *'um das Unerreichbare zu ringen.'* The most inspiring pages of literature are mere records of some fool's futile floundering among the problems of existence that rattle the reader's heart in the end. What does it matter? The most lovable hussy has her morning-after

effect; ends up by becoming tedious, or fat or treacherous, or some such thing,—what does it matter? What does anything matter so long as you hold in the palm of your hand that one definite, tangible thing that's there for you to wrestle with, and mould according to your skill or lack of it—that means daily grind, and endeavor, and ruthlessness, and chicanery,—no matter what, so long as it means ultimate triumph! And by the most succulent, golden brown square that I am going to force down the throats of chocolate-chewing humanity, until the name of Latimer's Milk Chocolate becomes a significant, renowned thing, I've got that tangible something, and I am going to wrestle with it exactly as I choose, and glory in the triumph of the thing, no matter how empty that triumph may be!"

"Poor dear,"—Mrs. Renwick spoke without her usual note of raillery,—*"the taste of milk chocolate will become bitter in your mouth, the smell of chocolate a reek in your nostrils, the mention of chocolate a discord in your ears."*

Suzanne turned to her mother with an indignant look; her lips parted as if to denounce this dampening of romance and eloquence by the mop of mature skepticism. But his carefree laugh quenched the words already trembling at her lips as, more radiant and dauntless than ever, he waved a disdainful hand.

"There you go, Joan! The she-moralist with her eternal hankering to restrain the free flights of man; the feminine element in the full bane of its conservatism before any new enterprise! What if I do get sick of this chocolate thing? It's chocolate in the abstract, as it were, chocolate as a stepping stone that matters to me. Chocolate means money, and money means power, and power, after all, is the finest thing in the world! Control of the chocolate industry will mean the first bit of progress toward control of banks, control of stock markets, control of politics, control of everything.



I'm going to be a capitalist, and a damned big one, too!

"This country," he went on, "has become the laughing stock of Europe, with its rabid reformers and fathead uplifters, but remember one thing: this country has produced the capitalist in his full glory, this country is falling further and further into the hands of the big interests, and therein lies its one hope. So long as against a million imbeciles there's one constructive genius who leaves, as his monument, six thousand miles of railroad, say,—then all is far from lost. For the great seeks always to fraternize with the great. So far, only in a groping incoherent sort of way have these financiers held out a hand to art and science. Their picture galleries are filled with the daubs of jaded academicians. In music and poetry they flounder, too, and can't hit upon the new and the wonderful as they hit upon it among problems of river transportation, for instance. . . . Well, I'm going to be a big financier, the biggest of the lot. And after I've arranged a bunch of things that are on my hands now, I'll go in, not for anything so fatuous as patronage of the fine arts, but for the business of seeking out the new man who's as big in his line as I am in mine, of meeting him with mutual respect and liking, of giving him his chance, and making money out of it in the end. I'll capitalize art! I'll commercialize art! They say it can't be done. . . . We'll see! It's a new industry and a big one. I'll back no subsidized theater for some superannuated Juliet to bore her audiences in; I'll not scour Europe for a few haggard Madonnas and outworn Barbizons, to be acclaimed a great collector. But I'll find the new man, and bring him out, and be the leader of a dawning aristocracy of efficiency in no matter what line of endeavor! . . . You'll see!"

With his head held high, and his shoulders back, he stood looking, with the flaming eyes at once of a seer and achiever, straight before him. His so-

norous sentences rolled out. His voice had risen almost to a vibrant shout. Scarce, however, had he stopped when Mrs. Renwick subjoined a derisive dampener.

"Hail, *Uebermensch!*" she mocked softly.

But another "Hail, *Uebermensch!*" came in an echoing treble from the corner, came in a cry a little above a whisper, and yet so fraught with the rapport of youth, so sweet in its timid declaration of fealty, as to drown, with its low-voiced homage, even the cynical commiseration of maturity. The boy wheeled, and for the first time looked full into Suzanne's eyes. She was white with excitement, the fire-light alone tingeing with its red glow her round upturned face. Her clasped hands, which unconsciously she had extended toward him, trembled a little.

In the next room, as if to cast off the spell of the boy's rhetorical outburst, the three men smiled in pitying sympathy, shook their heads significantly, and resumed their conversation. Joan Renwick, the unnoticed one now, sank back into her chair with her lips drooping slightly, and her eyes on the floor. . . . But in blissful oblivion the boy and girl continued to gaze at each other. Upon his face gradually there dawned the look of one who perceives for the first time something beautiful that had hitherto escaped his notice.

### III

AFTER a long stillness, Mrs. Renwick broke the spell with a rustling of her draperies, and a light taunting laugh. Latimer turned to her, a little ill at ease. Seeking to reassure his manner of nonchalant indifference, "Decidedly decorative, Joan," he drawled, "this child of yours."

"Isn't she, though?" She went over to Suzanne, and laid a caressing hand upon the curls. "Let me introduce you to my daughter, Wallie. Here's a maid of eighteen with a face to draw men's hearts, who never cries, never loses her temper, who doesn't care for young

people, who likes to sit in corners and drink in the weary wisdom of grey-heads, and time-to-be-greyheads, who has been educated along modern lines, a girl for whom neither her father's delinquencies nor Weininger's theories contain any secrets,—and finally, and most amazing of all, a girl who's never been kissed. . . . Cultivate her while I bestow a bit of attention upon my other guests. Perhaps she'll make up for the she-moralist's lack of enthusiasm. Perhaps you'll discover that the impeccable wife's one right to existence is in providing such as you with such as she."

She crossed the room with her light, energetic step, while the boy and girl resumed their wondering contemplation. At the door, over her shoulder, she called:

"Incidentally, Wallie, after you leave to-night, don't curse yourself for a fool when you remember that flow of eloquence. The man of twenty must talk of his hopes, and is ashamed of his garrulousness. The man of fifty keeps silence,—and his silence shames him."

But neither of them heard her. They continued to look at each other, both with something at once abject and triumphant shining in their eyes. On Latimer's part, the poise and assurance which had hitherto directed his discourse turned every instant into a more awkward abashment, until as by an effort of orientation among unexplored depths, he laughed with a touch of shamefaced bravado:

"You've certainly had an education, Miss Renwick."

While Suzanne winced at the chafing tone, at the same time in her eyes there appeared a spark of challenge. She seemed to realize for all her trepidation, that this stripling who sought to treat her like a callow little girl must be enlightened, must be shown that there was a completely sophisticated, and by no means shrinking young woman, as ready as he for tourney, as conversant as he with the rules of the game.

"Oh, I've had some education!" she

fluttered, emerging from her corner, and facing him.

He received this in silence, with a smile in which, rather than raillery, subjugation played so prominent a part as almost to frighten her with the speedy triumph it implied. She hung her head, and her next venture came in a shaky whisper:

"I know all about Priscilla, you see."

"Priscilla?"

"Priscilla with the eyes of a shy gazelle, who breathes out obscenities like a maiden her prayers."

"Good Lord! That education of yours hasn't been neglected to the minutest detail."

A quick glance gave her an unmistakable display of interest that heartened her for further attack. "To the minutest detail," she chirped, "I'm very much there with the education, Wallie Latimer."

When he made no reply, a little hesitant, her eyes still lowered, she hazarded another bit of illumination: "I go on sprees as well as you,—and with Father, too."

Once more, a "Good Lord!" was all he vouchsafed, and she went on hurriedly: "I mean his mild sprees, when he sits home here for hours over his cognac. I sit on his knee and listen while he talks,—and you may believe me, there are times when he *talks!*"

Again there came a pause. The firewood crackled behind them. From the next room, Mrs. Renwick's melodious laugh interspersed itself with the weary voices of the men. And yet about these two there hung a certain soundlessness, at once sinister and obsequious, as if the very atmosphere were deferentially holding its breath before this spectacle of dawning florescence, only in anticipation of a hearty laugh sooner or later at their expense. . . . At length she raised her head, glanced at him and shifted her gaze, opened her lips and closed them again, appeared desperately to oscillate between shyness and temerity, and at last, in a choking whisper, "Will you," she breathed, —and fell silent, and then with a quick

gasp went on: "Dear thing, will you take me on a spree?"

His hand closed then over the little, dimpled one trembling at her side. She acquired courage when he nodded without a word.

"And will you take me to-morrow, to-morrow evening,—just on a perfectly harmless spree?"

Again he nodded, his fingers tightening over hers.

"Will you take me to dinner to one of the places where Father and you take the Priscillas?"

His brows lifted, while he turned over this request in perplexity, but presently for the third time, he nodded. "To one of the milder ones, Suzanne." In his voice there was a little break, a tenderness, a note of guardianship that none of Mrs. Renwick's blishments had provoked.

"And please, please, Wallie, dear," she cried softly, "will you promise not to mention it to Mother beforehand?"

At this he reflected for a moment before shaking his head. "Come now, old fellow, would that be quite sporting? Besides—I'm sure of it—Joan wouldn't mind."

"Of course Joan wouldn't mind," she returned in a rapid undertone, "That's just it,—don't you see?—why I don't want her to know. She'd laugh at it and make us feel foolish, and spoil everything. Please don't tell her, will you? She'll be out to-morrow, and you may just call for me at six. Won't you, please, please, Wallie?" she coaxed, nestling closer.

"Very good, old fellow, have it as you will."

Once again a still period followed. But eye to eye, and hand to hand, the tremor in her arm passed to his, the eagerness of his face reflected itself upon hers. In the next room, as from a great distance, they saw, not three successful, respected men and a beautiful woman in her prime, but merely a group of worn-out, middle-aged folk, who leaned over a table, and were oblivious to all this only because such a sight would dazzle their dull eyes, and

blind them with its splendor. . . .

He drew her, unresisting, closer to him. His arm tightened about her. She lifted her face, in full view of the four who never raised their eyes to see. Their lips met in a quick kiss.

He released her immediately, and she fell back a few steps from him, all rosininess, and shining blue eyes, and inaudible chuckles. "That was quite the nicest thing that ever happened to me," she warbled. "You know,—it's the first time,—I've often wondered what it would be like. . . . Quite the most delightful experience! You, Wallie,—did you like it, too?"

His glance, in its expressiveness, was adequate response. "I think that I'm growing really quite fond of you," she went on, "Do you think you are of me?"

"Up to the hilt!"

"Then,"—a great rapturous sigh escaped her,— "Then everything is exactly as it should be!"

"Splendidly, gorgeously, miraculously, as it should be, Suzanne!" Without a hint of abashment his voice rang out now, the voice of a conqueror, rang with the same ring that had been there a little while before when he spoke of the achievements ahead for him. And just as on that occasion, Mrs. Renwick had interposed with a skeptical laugh, so now her jesting voice topped his. She came sailing into the room.

"How are you progressing, Wallie, with my unkissed Suzanne?"

Between the boy and the girl there passed a glance, the merest fraction of a glance, but charged with a delightful secret, a mysterious understanding.

He answered with a pleasantry. The others joined them at the fireside. And dinner was announced.

#### IV

"AND so this is Priscilladom?"

"In its mildest aspect, old fellow."

"I find it quite quaint and charming."

It was nearly midnight. A throng

of dancers passed and re-passed before them, to the ragtime strains of a black-faced band. In an atmosphere heavy with cigarette smoke, people at tables about them talked loudly, imbibed freely. But oblivious for the most part to it all, the two sat as they had been sitting for hours, in the hush that their thoughts made of this clamor, while course after course of their dinner left the table almost untouched, — sat, among palms and mirrors, among swinging lights, and vivid-colored bezilements, with now and again an interchange of smiles, or a significant word, or a light furtive meeting of hand with hand over the little table that separated them.

Suzanne cast an appraising eye over the dancers. "And these are the Priscillas with their cavaliers?"

"Motley crew, aren't they?"

"None of the gentlemen seem half as nice as Father and you."

"These are the regulars, Suzanne. Will and I come here seldom, and only—"

"I see," she replied, with a puzzled frown that cast doubts over the extent of her perception. She resumed her survey of the dancers, and repeated wonderingly: "So these are the Priscillas!"

His eyes followed hers in a look that swept the ambling, tripping, jostling mass. "In justice to them it must be said that not all of these are of the ranks. See that one?" He nodded toward an ungainly pair who were treading mercilessly on each other's toes. The woman wore an antiquated dress and low-heeled shoes. Strands of drab hair fell over her shining unpowdered face, and she beamed benignly.

"Such women as that," he went on, "spoil the sport of this sort of thing. At long intervals, they leave their flats for a dip into 'life,' as they call it. She finds this a delightfully wicked Babylon, every traveling salesman disporting himself among the chickens' a Don Juan, every chicken a Lorelei, and she herself the siren queen. To-night she

basks, and later, when she discovers that her pinhead spouse has been here with a calculating companion who shames him less, she'll shriek that these places be closed. Why doesn't it occur to some enterprising restaurateur to bar ugly women? He'd make a whacking success. That woman wounds the eye."

"She's old," Suzanne subjoined in a tone of scathing contempt that reflected itself on his part, when he burst into an explosion of disgust.

"These homely women! They are everywhere. Here where only chickens belong, and, worse, in concert halls, for instance, where *no* woman really belongs. I've an idea that when, centuries ago, they first realized their ugliness they became worthy housewives or blue stockings, and so tried to annihilate the pretty, lazy, cutesy type. Now they see they've failed, they're all converging to a noisome focus,—all becoming feminists. That woman there is still in the housewife stage; her daughter will be an emancipated woman. I'm certain that scrawny necks lie at the basis of feminism. The advanced ladies are the black sheep of the flock, the bandy-legged ewes."

The girl's attention remained fixed upon the dancers. Her soft voice presented another opinion. "I like the little bits of cunning ones best," she chirruped.

When he offered no comment upon this, she turned to him a smile whose radiance softened to a look of timid, wondering pride in him, before the look of timid wondering pride in her that shone on his face. One of the interludes, wherein for their part the music, and laughter, and clattering of dishes became as nothing, fell over them.

"You're such a—such a gentle little creature, Suzanne," was all he finally ventured. But she drank it in with a deepening of the flush of her face.

"Like me better than the Priscillas, don't you, Wallie?"

"You,"—he floundered about for a word adequate to express such devo-

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tion as his,—“you knock 'em cold, old fellow.”

Again the flush deepened. “How nice all this is!” Her hand glided across the table for one of the stealthy clasps they had permitted themselves at intervals when no waiter hung near. But this time his fingers tightened, and over him she saw sweeping again the strange transformation that compressed his lips, and flashed a light of determined energy from his eyes.

“It’s wonderful! And it’s going to go on being wonderful! We’ll show 'em, Suzanne,—all the skeptical fossils who’ve found no joy in life, and all the fools who can get it only in holes like this. We’ll show 'em, we two! I’m going to do big things,—big things, and Latimer’s lovely wife will be as famous as Latimer’s chocolate. We’ll show 'em! When we’re married—”

He faltered, and fell silent. It was the first broachment of forthcoming alliance.

“When we’re married,” her quivering undertone concurred. “Then we’ll show 'em, dear.”

With the music’s cessation, they were brought abruptly to themselves. In laughing, loud-voiced groups the dancers returned to their tables. And the boy frowned.

“Let’s get out of this. The fool thing palls.”

While for a time he occupied himself with the prosaic, as the waiter tendered a check, Suzanne drew on her gloves unwillingly. And when they had risen, she lingered beside the table in an uneasy silence that was broken only when his manifest impatience made her summon the shy words.

“The spree isn’t over yet? We’re not going home?”

“Not for hours.”

“Then,—across the dance-floor, do you see?—on the other side, there’s another entrance,—do you see?”

Puzzled, he nodded.

“Well, dear, why not let’s go out that way? Why not start right in showing them? We’ll walk straight across that

dance floor, and let these fool people see how we knock 'em all cold!”

## V

A SULTRINESS greeted them when they passed out into the warm spring night. Faint rumblings of thunder betokened a tempestuous interim before daybreak. Stealthy breezes already were proclaiming themselves harbingers of approaching storm. Latimer’s eyes lit with a spirit of adventure.

“Let’s ride around in the rain,” he suggested.

“In an open taxi,” she seconded directly. “Through the park.”

“Right you are, Suzanne!”

Avidly her hand sought his, when they passed through the park entrance, and into an atmosphere redolent with spring-time verdure. With his head resting in content against her shoulder, he peered up into the murkiness lowering over them.

“Here I am, a benedick-to-be, and glorying in the foretaste! Two days ago I considered a wife the dimmest, remotest, unpleasantest possibility. And now I find myself with Will Renwick’s eighteen-year-old, my full-fledged fiancée on my hands, and as happy as—”

“As Will Renwick’s eighteen-year-old,” she piped, snuggling closer.

“Aren’t you glad,”—after a long, tranquil pause he proceeded,—“Aren’t you glad that there isn’t any moon? Doesn’t it make you feel like a new and fastidious brand of lover not to find yourself in duty bound to rant over a third-rate satellite that’s inspired all the jejune courtships and bleating declarations of a jejune, bleating humanity? Isn’t this wind in your face better, and the pitch blackness, and the thunder? Invigoration without any slushiness,—isn’t it better?”

“Much better,” she agreed, merrily, “who wants a tip-tilted, lop-sided moon?”

The fragrance of floescence drifted to them from trees and lawns on either side. Abruptly the wind died down, as if to rally its powers for the forthcom-



ing rampage. Of a sudden the boy sat up aglow with a new idea.

"Let's get out, and walk through the park during the storm. Get soaked, and perhaps be chased by a cop for suspicious characters. What do you say?"

She breathed a blissful acquiescence. "Oh, let's!"

The driver, at his dismissal, bestowed upon them so commiserative a look of surprise as to send her laughter pealing through the air in company with the redoubtable rumblings. A flash of lightning lit up before them a fleeting vista of rolling lawns, and trees swaying in the first, playful onslaught of a wind that redoubled its vehemence, now, with every puff. In the intense stillness between blasts, when, as in a suspension of all light, all sound, all movement, immense projects, mighty, inchoate enterprises of existence seemed to hang in an awe-inspiring balance, the two walked on in a gay aloneness with something at once terrifying and sweet about it. He walked along as if each great, swinging stride were bringing him closer to the goal unquestionably before him, . . . and beside him breathlessly she pattered. Through the darkness they peered into one another's faces, blinked, smiling, at the bursts of light; waited, in impatience, for the rain.

"Wallie,"—she plucked in excitement at his sleeve, when a flash for an instant illumined the world for them—"ahead of us, on a bench, there's a man. . . . Maybe he's a thug, a highwayman. Maybe there'll be a hold-up. Wouldn't it be good fun?"

"Fine!"

They walked on through the darkness, their eyes riveted upon the almost indiscernible figure before them. And when, just as they were passing it, another radiation revealed an old, shabby, bleary-eyed creature with his head hanging slovenly on his breast, the boy's short laugh resounded along with her tintinnabular peals. Muttering under his breath, the man rose and walked off

with unsteady steps. Latimer looked after him.

"There," he commented, "goes another antiquated failure, grumbling at the spectacle of a happiness he's missed, slinking cravenly away like all the slavish, fossilized dastards who slink before any enterprise, before anything that's new, and big, and bound to succeed. . . . You feel sorry for the fools, but give them a bit of consideration and what happens? They're at you like a lot of spiteful old women, trying to hold you down. Kick 'em into the dust-heap; there's the only way. Who was it that said the pyramids were worth the millions of slaves who died building 'em? He had the right idea, only"—another shaft showed them the man stumbling along with bowed head, and the boy's voice fell in perplexity—"only there's always the disquieting possibility that among the millions that fell there was one, in the talons of the fossils, who with half a chance could have left something behind him that would make those pyramids look like a counterfeit jitney. . . . always the disquieting possibility—"

"There aren't any disquieting possibilities for us," she cried, troubled at the somberness which hung over his face, "for it's beginning to rain, dear. I just felt a drop on my nose. And here it comes! Oh, but this will be a spree for fair!"

Like the preliminary chuckle of a great, angry laugh that was speeding on to sweep the whole world before it, a jocund gust caught his hat and sent it away sailing into the gloom. The wind blew sportively; a few raindrops fell without force upon them. The lightning showed them trees swaying easily, rhythmically, as if not aware of the storm rushing on with criminal intent upon their loveliest branches.

"Let's watch it from that hill over there."

"Yes, let's, Wallie."

They turned from the path, and had progressed but a few steps across the sward, when in all its pent-up fury the storm burst. Rain fell in sheets, stung

their faces, beat upon them mercilessly. Thunderbolts followed one another in quick succession, with blinding shafts and ear-splitting crashes, while the wind, full upon them, howled a glee that seemed to translate itself into fury as, unimpeded by its protests, dogged, disdainful, they went on in the face of it, crossed the green, mounted the hill, stood at its summit, laughing, clinging to each other, their lips meeting in contemptuous disregard of the tumult.

"Let's stand under that tree," came her panting suggestion; "they say trees are the first things lightning strikes, but to-night we'll show the fool thing that it doesn't dare."

"Come on, then," he shouted. "We'll show it whether it can interfere. We'll show 'em all, Suzanne, we two!"

She stood on tiptoe in glee, lifted her glowing little face to the lashing rain. "Some spree, this! Tingley sort of thing, this love stuff, isn't it? . . . enchanting."

Erect, dauntless, with his feet firm in the moist soil, and his arm slung about her, the smile of battle played upon his lips, and he seemed to sense in each deafening, dazzling bolt a proclamation of victory over forces more insidious if less violent, wilier, meaner, and as powerless to impede. Deep in thought, engrossed in the achievements he visualized, he stood silent. It was Suzanne, the silent little creature of low chairs in obscure corners, who prattled away at the top of her lungs, who shouted, almost inaudibly through the roar, her gay prognostications.

"We'll be married. We'll be the only happy people in the world! You'll have a wife who knocks 'em all cold . . . and we'll show 'em, we two!"

"Latimer's wife," she pursued, "will be great financier! Every man will envy you me, and every woman will envy me you. . . . Shall we have any children and things?"

In his abstraction he only smiled vaguely, so she decided the matter for herself. "We'll have two, a little blond boy who'll look like me, and a little dark girl who'll look like you—handsomest

children ever! He'll become the greatest man in the world, and she the most beautiful woman."

When a detached smile again served for his only response, there came a tug at his arm. She rubbed her face on his coat-sleeve to wipe off the blinding raindrops.

"What would you do if they turned out"—she searched her mind for a calamity great enough to stir him from his absorption and shouted through the rain—"if they turned out, he a fathead uplifter, and she a feminist?"

"Tumble you into a nunnery, and turn celibate for sheer shame!"

His smile gleamed, and he caught her closer; it was only a moment before another bolt brought him back under the spell of vast enterprises that were unfolding, and lured. A merry rebuke aroused him. "You're all wrapt up in your old chocolate factory."

"You're become part of the chocolate factory, old fellow, and the chocolate factory part of you! Part of life, and the fine struggles of it, and the happiness, and the success. Suzanne, I tell you, it's going to be stupendous!"

A great, lurid glare gave them then a panorama of the storm's devastation. It had flattened flowering bushes to the ground, beaten down the grass, extinguished the street-lamps that hitherto had glimmered hazily. Beneath its furious assault, the trees seemed to bow their heads abjectly, to surrender, in despair, their branches to the gale that tore them from the trunks, and swept them contemptuously before it. In the fleeting inundations of light, the park surrounding them became for these two the whole world, and in this world there was no living creature other than they, and in this world there was nothing that failed to fall prostrate before the tempest save only they, who stood under a tree, on the summit of a hill, unharmed and disdainful, who laughed at each deafening detonation.

Suddenly, as if unaware of what he was doing, he lifted her from her feet, and held the little body aloft in his strong arms. Just then there came a

bolt before which the very earth seemed to quake, and shrink into quivering servility. But in the face of this as in the face of the supreme manifestation of a frenzied impotence, he held her, like an emblem, in the air. And while the reverberations became fainter and fainter, her trilling tinkle blent with his loud laugh, in a supreme manifestation of their young invincibility . . .

That laugh brought them to the apex of the escapade. There was no further point to be attained, no caress to enhance the triumph of it, no word to express the exaltation it conveyed. With the echo of it in their ears, they ran down the hill through the rain, and as if guided by a spirit friendly to their adventure found themselves within a few minutes at a park entrance but a short distance from the Renwick home.

He, with bared head, she with hat askew, her wet hair falling about her shoulders, deluged with water they trudged through the streets, in beatific unconcern of the few belated bystanders, who, from doorways, grinned at their progress through the train. They reached the house, mounted the steps, clung to each other while she searched in an immense handbag for her key. The echo of the laugh was still in their ears. . . . It died abruptly when the door swung open, and Joan Renwick appeared before them.

Wrapt in a dark dressing-gown, as superb and composed as ever, there was that in her smile's frigidity which caused the boy's shoulders defiantly to straighten and Suzanne's lips to droop.

"We've been on a spree," she hazarded at length.

"It's quite all right, Joan, old girl," he put in with a puzzled laugh. "Don't do the Grundy act, for it's pointless in this instance. Behold the future Mrs. Latimer, and extend a friendly blessing."

But the cool, courteous words that fell from the woman's lips only antagonized the two. The girl threw a fluttering smile to Latimer, and edged furtively toward the staircase, while he frowned full into the glacial face con-

fronting him, and with an abrupt "See you in the morning, first thing," went off into the street.

Mrs. Renwick closed the door. An imperious gesture checked her daughter's flight.

## VI

SHE stood for a long while contemplating Suzanne with her amused smile. In the dimness, in the quiet, a certain portentousness hovered. Finally the girl became uneasy under this frigid scrutiny. From one foot to the other she fidgeted; removed her drenched hat; smoothed back the wet curls that tumbled untidily over her forehead. Her lips parted only to close again, as if she were seeking vainly for the suitable word to say. Her troubled glance traveling up the stairway implied a longing to slip away from the ominous something which hung in the air. After several minutes the silent condemnation that had crept into her face at the first glimpse of her mother disclosed itself audibly.

"It wasn't sporting of you, Mother. You've talked so much about letting the fledgling fly. Then why did you wait up for me, and open the door, and before Wallie make me look like some naughty child who had to be punished?"

Faint surprise emanated from the other's face. "Indeed, pet, I had no such intention. I was waiting for your father, he's on a spree. And when I heard someone at the door . . ." She shrugged her shoulders expressively, laughed, and continued her contemplation. For all her evident efforts at composure, beneath it Suzanne ultimately succumbed. Tears welled up into her eyes. And just as the first sob broke from her throat her mother started toward her, caught her close, and kissed her, somewhat tenderly for a parent unassociated with such demonstrations, and somewhat awkwardly, as if among her many accomplishments the superb Mrs. Renwick had neglected to make herself an adept at caresses.

"You poor monkey," she was murmuring, "you poor forlorn, foredoomed little monkey."

Suzanne's shaking shoulders straightened and the tear-laden eyes flashed. Indignation, modulated by politeness, sounded from her lips. "You're quite wrong. I'm not in the least forlorn, Mother."

"Poor forlorn, foredoomed monkey." The older woman appeared not to have heard the protest.

"Foredoomed to what?" In exasperation she tried to wriggle from the encircling arms. But they tightened about her with her mother's reply:

"Wifehood, my pet."

Suzanne permitted herself the retaliation of a condescending sigh. Presently she found herself steered into the next room by this parent whose embrace smothered rather than comforted, this parent who had come to stand for poise, composure, lack of emotional display, whose show of warmth begot only a hankering for the huge, bearded man who did this sort of thing so much more convincingly.

"You're wrong, Mother," her stifled voice at length proclaimed. "I'm not in the least forlorn. I'm not foredoomed to anything except what's going to be most awfully agreeable. And, all in all, I'm very happy to-night."

At this she was abruptly released from the maternal embrace. A sigh of relief escaped her. She sank into a chair and watched her mother, who crossed the room, and stood at the window drumming upon the panes. The storm was passing. Without any fury behind it, the rain lashed the windows feebly, and blew into the room a gloomy chill. Only an hour before, the boy and girl had stood, their feet planted firmly in the moist earth, had laughed at the powerlessness of such force as stinging rain, and mighty bolts, and blinding coruscations before the spectacle of their triumphant youth. Now this woman, straight and tall, tranquil and slender, proud and unruffled, stood staring into the gloom, and seemed helplessly to beat upon the window, with as

much futility in her efforts as in the force that sent the silly little drops beating so feebly against the other side of the pane. At last, without ceasing her monotonous drumming, without turning her head, she spoke as if to herself, with a quality awful and melancholy behind the chilled tones:

"No, you don't feel forlorn and foredoomed. It was all delightful, wasn't it? The first time your little fingers twined between his strong ones, the first kiss—and did you joy in the feel of the rough tweed when first you leaned your head against his shoulders? The sense of power over him, the sense of abasement before him! The joy and the thrill and the promise that throws a glow over everything . . . the triumph of the thing! . . . I know, I know. . . . No, you don't feel forlorn and foredoomed. It was all delightful."

A defiant little laugh sounded from the girl. "Yes, it was all delightful, and, more, it's going to keep right on being delightful, too."

Her mother appeared not to hear.

"Do you know what I am, Suzanne?" the deep, sad voice went on, "I, the charming Mrs. Renwick, the well-dressed Mrs. Renwick, the handsome Mrs. Renwick who's made such a success out of marriage? I'm merely a worthy humdrum, merely a *hausfrau*. And don't think there's any dishonor attached to that. I glory in the title! Only—it's the *hausfrau's* troubles and problems that are eating into my heart now, for the *hausfrau's* troubles and problems are ahead for you, dear. The toil of it—the grind of it! In their trite little way they're terrifying, colossal things, Suzanne."

"When I heard the boy," she continued, in disjointed, unfinished phrases with long pauses between, "last night . . . airing his arrogant dreams in my Will's ears! He had his dreams, too. . . . Vaster, finer, more stupendous. Married and settled down. . . . There you have it! Men like these two, my Will, your Wallie—a woman sticks to such as they, clings. . . . His silk mills were to have been the first step toward



mighty achievements. Well, he's made a good living out of them. Browses over his symphony scores—goes on a drunk now and then. . . . That's all! That's the end of the aspirations. . . . You start in so sure of everything. Mean to buoy them up—end up for all your striving by dragging 'em down—give your love to them, give your life, and find out you're given nothing. . . . For all the sweetness with which they try to conceal it from you, you know you've been an encumbrance. . . . They've married and settled down, that's all—and there you have it!"

Slowly the woman turned and faced her daughter, who dug her palms deep into the carved wood of the chair as if to control an impulse to run out of the room, out of the dismal atmosphere, away from this stranger with her frozen smile—so white had her mother's face become, so drawn and pinched the lips, so keen the pain revealed in the great eyes, the unhappy frown, the hard little lines about her mouth.

"You're predestined to it, and I've trained you for it . . . it seemed the only way. He wants to marry you, of course; you will, of course; and all things considered, perhaps it's for the best. Only . . . you have all your life before you, as the sugary folk say. It means that you've a dreary stretch before you. And when I saw you come in with your hat askew, your drenched frock, your tumbled curls, and with your lips parted in that smile of—the firstness of things, it seemed so tragic—all wrong. It seemed so pitiable that you two youngsters should spring straight into the slough without at least an attempt to dissuade you. It's all come for you with such an onrush. Only eighteen . . . and such a gentle little creature, and it's going to be so difficult, dear."

She raised the white arms, and held them out to the girl. There were tears in her eyes, tears so unwonted that at the sight Suzanne shrank further away, unresponsive, unmoved. Her troubled eyes seemed to tell her mother that agitation blended unhappily with the

mocking serenity she had hitherto attached to her every word and deed—that if there were any great sorrow ahead it was from the father's lips it must be heard, and only in the father's arms might assuagement be found. This woman, with a pitiful smile distorting her face, was a stranger. . . .

Presently the extended arms fell limply; by degrees the twisted features resumed their habitual tranquillity.

"You're quite right, my dear," she pronounced distinctly, nodding, and folding her arms. "Scenes are silly, I've trained you so. We'll continue the subject in absolute equanimity. . . . Sure you want to marry him?"

Suzanne nodded gravely. "Very, very sure, Mother."

"Hm—of course. But let me tell you, pet, there's someone to be considered before you. And that someone is a boy of twenty-four, abrim with hope, and enthusiasm, and the finest sort of ruthlessness. I'm excessively fond of you. There's a streak of maternal sentimentality somewhere in my get-up. If things go to smash for you, I'll not be immune to—well, an uncomfortable sensation in the cardiac region and lachrymal glands. . . . But, on the other hand, if you cause even the least of the smash-ups ahead for that boy, then"—her smile vanished into a great sternness—"then I'll be the most implacable enemy you'll ever have. . . . So be very sure, pet."

The pattering outside had ceased. Through the windows came the first hazy glimmering of approaching dawn.

"Don't worry, Mother, I'm quite sure." Suzanne's eyes, for all the polite attention they conveyed, began to blink sleepily. On her forehead there hung the shadow of a frown, which bespoke lack of interest in all these proceedings, a desire to escape with her happiness and her languor from this aimless, tiresome display of middle-aged disillusionment wherein lay nothing to hold her attention. The frown deepened when her mother moved away from the window, came over to her,



and caught the sleepy face almost roughly in her hands.

"You're lovely, dear—the sort men seek. And so am I. I told you I was Wallie's unfulfilled romance; I've been a round dozen unfulfilled romances in my time. You'll have to be careful of that sort of thing. No matter how much you love a man, there's always a bit of allure to it. But, first you haven't the time to give to such pursuits; the mere, humdrum problems of maintaining a smooth, well-balanced existence without scenes in it, without tears, or quarrels, or wrinkles, or dowdy frocks, the mere problems of being up to the mark consume every minute. Then, besides,—well, men are born with an instinct for the square deal, and the fair fight. We're not! We have to cultivate it. The woman of a man's life abjures dalliance, or else deserves the catastrophe that follows. . . . There's the other side of the question, too. Remember that the woman who slaves through the years of a man's struggles only to find herself misshapen, faded, haggard and hideous before her time, gets nothing more than her just deserts when he throws her over completely. These cries you'll hear of 'The woman gives, the woman pays!' are the emptiest fustian. That woman, and that woman alone, who satisfies a man's yearning for the beautiful, and continues through the years to satisfy it, that woman alone who's up to the mark, besides, in the duties required of her . . . only that woman may pride herself on having given her man a square deal. I have, . . . see that you do. . . . And bear in mind that no matter how well you succeed, it'll all wind up in flat, empty failure."

Incredulous disdain mingled with self-assurance in Suzanne's eyes. Her lips parted in indignant protest, but closed without a word when her mother walked away from her, and began to pace the floor swiftly, her head bowed as if deep in thoughts that escaped her, again in broken phrases interspersed by interludes of quiet.

"These men . . . in their world of

perpetual self-dissatisfaction—floundering among the riddles of existence. Their empty strivings, and flat failures—emptier and flatter with each year that goes by. That's all very well; you can watch it without horror. . . . But to watch the deep self-disgust with which they give in at last, to see them cease striving, give up the riddles of existence for the problems of mere livelihood . . . They've married and settled down—you see? And even then to fail them! Curb even the lesser flights! The times in the beginning, when in the midst of some big project, they turn to you, and are willing to let it all go to smash for the sake of a sudden whim. . . . You have to meet it calmly—always the impeccable, you have to check 'em, and send them back to their tasks. . . . This cultivating control, a cool serenity; it's the most dispiriting thing in the world. Placidity, placidity, always placidity! The first step toward deadly apathy, that's what placidity is. You get cold, torpid, hard . . . just by wanting so terribly to comfort and help you become unable to . . . gets to the pass when a single spontaneous outburst is met by nothing more than uneasiness, as, for instance, you—when I opened my arms, when—"

"Dear Mother," Suzanne broke in with an exasperated cry, "I can't see the use of all this except to spoil my lovely evening. I'm awfully sorry that you've been unhappy. It's too bad that Father and you have somehow failed. But Wallie and I shan't! You've talked and talked, dear, and I've listened and listened—and I'm very sleepy, and I want to go to bed. Don't think I'm rude, will you, because I can't see where the tragedy all comes in, and—"

The words died in a gasp. She backed away from her mother with frightened eyes. For a tremor seized the older woman. She stood twisting her fingers until the joints cracked, and when she spoke there was such conviction in the hollow, rasping tones that Suzanne listened in awe.

"You'll see soon enough where the

tragedy all comes in. You'll see when you discover how immeasurably distant you two have become. To see all his aspirations go to pieces in the end—well and good, you won't mind that; without you they would have gone anyway. To see other women come into his life—plenty of 'em—you won't mind that; it's an inconsequential thing. But to find yourselves worlds apart! These men—at the moments of their highest exaltation, they're alone, dear. And you wouldn't mind even that except that they're lonely, and want you, and you can't reach them for all you try. But the moments of their blackest despair, Suzanne! Then they're alone, and lonely. Your hands are tied, you can't help, you can't do a thing, you're worlds apart, that's all, . . . and the whole long, dreary struggle comes to nothing!"

Suzanne's eyes fell. With scarce a residue of defiance, her voice came in a flat, stifled whisper. "It can't be, I won't have it so. . . . There must be something to make up for it all. Something you've missed! There must be something . . ."

Into the long stillness that followed there came at last a sound inarticulate and lovely, a sound, like a faraway croon, that resolved itself presently into words. The girl looked up. She saw a great light leap into her mother's eyes.

"There is something. I haven't missed it, dear. There are the moments of degradation. . . . In their moments of degradation—*then* they need us, *then* they're ours, *then* they're gods!"

The light died as suddenly as it had kindled. "But those moments are so few, Suzanne, and it's such a wearisome grind. Don't marry. Do anything else. Be a—what is it you call 'em?—be a Priscilla. Be anything at all but that. . . . For in the main life inspires nothing so magnificent as terror—a faint disgust, only, a sort of nausea, or rather—rather—" She paused searching for a word adequate to express a disillusionment as complete as hers.

The word never came. From the

hallway just then they heard the fumbling of a latchkey.

## VII

WITH the sound a strange acceleration swept over the two. Eyes brightened. Heads lifted. The mother's lips, parted for the word which had died in the utterance, curled into a slow, glad smile wherein there lay nothing of mockery, nothing of despair. And when over the haggard face a flood of color swept, it expunged with its warmth the sorrow in her eyes, the hard little lines, the unhappy frown. Suzanne clapped her hands in excitement. For a moment the two stood beaming at one another.

"He's lit all right," the girl whispered in glee. "Fumbling worse than usual, isn't he? He's lit—he's squiffed to the eyes, he's roaring, he's paralyzed! And oh, I may help you hoist to-night, mayn't I, Mother?"

"He's lit all right." There was the hint of a chuckle in the older woman's voice. She hurried out of the room, Suzanne pattering after her, and, with an exultant laugh, swung open the door as if, in the doddering creature thereby revealed, she beheld all the joys of the universe.

He blinked; he swayed. He was hatless, with bloodshot eyes that stared unseeing before him. His mud-bespattered clothes implied an undignified journey home. Even the majestic beard gave an impression of awriness. That the great wax and wane of intoxication, the buoyant quickening of the senses and subsequent stupefaction, was almost at its last stage, both women realized at their first sight of the hanging jaw and sinking head. They flew to their places, one on either side and slipped their arms about him, smiling into the eyes that with a glimmer of recognition roved unsteadily from one to the other. Finally with infinite deliberation, came the blurred words.

"Hullo, girls!"

"Hullo, there!" rang a clear voice from one side.

"Hullo, there!" echoed a piping treble.

A faint, feeble grin overspread his face, to fade by degrees into a look of protesting dignity. He waved an unsteady arm.

"Want you—distinctly to understand—unequivocally rational."

"Right you are, old boy!"

Suzanne's merry reverberation was barely audible, so aflutter had she become. She did her share of the pushing and tugging that landed him at the foot of the stairway. But once there she lingered a moment, while her glance wandered up the flight, her arm slipt from him, and the joy on her face changed to grave wonderment, as if a mighty conviction were fixing itself upon her consciousness, as if an astounding revelation, not yet quite palpable, were beginning to assume definite form.

Formidable, they loomed before her; twenty heavily carpeted steps, and then a landing—a precarious spot, where he sometimes fell—then two more steps to the left, and there, across the hall, the lofty goal of furious exertions that strained the muscles of her little back and benumbed her arms—the bed to be reached in time for this huge, helpless Responsibility who leaned so heavily, and with such touching dependence, to "take the count" among its silken quilts. Here was something to be done, a task clearly outlined, herein lurked no indecisions, no doubts, nor grave misgivings. . . . Impatiently her mother moved forward with a "Hoist, Suzanne, hoist!" But, with one foot poised upon the lowest stair, she remained, without speaking, until at last the idea floating hazily in her brain slipt, without any conscious effort to formulate it, from her:

"The definite, tangible something, Mother—the thing you can grasp in the palm of your hand. Wallie's factory . . . for you it's just this, this hoisting him successfully up the stairs. . . . And for me, well, there'll be some such thing, too."

A shadow fell over the older wom-

an's face. "And yet, Suzanne, even a hefty, addle-pated lackey could do it better than we."

"But, don't you see, Mother?" In her eagerness the treble swelled to unwonted fullness. "There's no hefty lackey here. But *we're* here, we two. We were waiting. We're ready. We're on the spot, can do it—efficiently. . . . We're on the spot, and that's the great thing. You see?"

"I see, Suzanne!" And the tired lips broke again into their smile.

He no longer staggered, nor blinked. A heavy torpor seemed to hold him in its grasp. Suzanne, affrighted, saw the dead-looking eyes begin to roll backward. "Good heavens, Mother! He's beginning to take the count. We've been wasting time. Hoist!"

"Right you are, Suzanne!" They laughed into each other's faces, and proceeded to the business at hand.

Successfully the first step was mounted, and the next, and the next. He stumbled at the fourth, and on the fifth swayed so alarmingly that in their efforts to balance him the veins bulged at the women's temples, great beads of perspiration began to glisten on their foreheads, and the color left their faces. But through it all they continued their almost soundless laughter and when the sixth post of progress was reached in comparatively facile fashion, Suzanne, her face empurpled by the strain, panted a serene conviction. "We'll get him there without a doubt!"

"Not a chance in the world that we won't," her mother chuckled in response. "Now for the seventh—take care! Well done, my pet!"

Each muscle strained to the utmost, each instant an eon, they covered the next six steps.

"Only seven more to the landing," the girl carolled between gasps, "Isn't it delightful, this sort of thing?"

"Delightful, Suzanne."

Laughing, knowing glances passed between them as they proceeded. At the sixteenth step the mother wavered a little, and the bulky form seemed about to slip from her grasp. As if a last,

feeling degree of consciousness had been summoned by the apprehension of danger, the man's voice, confused and far-away, sounded from the depths of his beard.

"Hi, there, old girl—have a care! Tremendous undertaking, this."

"Hi, there, old girl, have a care!" Suzanne parroted gleefully. "Tremendous undertaking, this. Hoist, now! Hoist for all you're worth! Hoist for dear life!"

Panting, gasping, straining, their breasts heaving with exhaustion, they got him up the few stairs remaining to the landing. There both stopped, and heaved a sigh that was part a glad, dry sob. As from an exalted peak they looked down upon the flight they had mounted . . .

From then on the course was easy. Aware of no effort, continuing their laughter, they dragged him, guided him, lifted him over the remaining stairs, and across the hall. Quick, happy phrases passed between them at each step.

"Isn't it charming?" Suzanne asked.

"Stimulating, pet, stimulating."

"And we've accomplished it efficiently?"

"Couldn't have been done better."

"Occasional excitement to the humdrum, isn't there?"

"Stimulation, Suzanne, stimulation."

With a last, gigantic tug and push they landed him upon the bed. Across the counterpane he sprawled, bloated, sodden, snoring, one leg hanging limply over the edge of the bed. The girl fell to her knees to lift it, and hugged the bespattered boot, staining her frock, streaking her hands and face with mud. Through the windows the first rays of a rising sun peered placidly. She shook the disheveled curls from her eyes. Over her face there stole a rapt look.

"Oh, you're quite right, Mother, they are, they are!" she whispered. "In their moments of degradation—then they need us, then they're ours, then they're gods!"

"It's the only time, Suzanne,"—the older woman's voice trembled with

acute joy—"that we humdrums can reach high enough to crown them with our laurels. . . . And now let's unlace his boots."

Her eyes intent upon a knotted shoelace, Suzann<sup>e</sup> went on: "You've got to be either one or the other, either impeccable or the other thing. And no matter what you do, in their great moments you're out of it. They're alone and lonely, and you can't help. But in their degradation—"

"Ah, in their degradation, dear—"

At the same instant each pulled off a muddy shoe and held it, like an emblem, in the air, as together they cried:

"Then they're gods!"

The sun was rising now in all its springtime splendor. Outside the street noises were beginning to be heard. Suzanne laid a muddy little hand over her mother's. "My Wallie," she murmured, "is wonderful, he's simply wonderful. He's worth anything—everything . . . But to the business at hand. We must take off his collar now."

In a preoccupied way she commenced to grapple with a recalcitrant collar button. But in the midst of her task she stopped abruptly, leaned over, and planted a kiss full on the tip of her father's violently vermilion nose, danced over to her mother, and for an instant nestled her tousled head against the flushed, happy face; then laughing, crying, flew to the window, threw apart the curtain, and flung her hands into the air, while straight from the ardent little heart to the eager lips, all the wisdom of it, and wonder, and confusion, and innocence, sang a sublime assurance, a blithe oburgation, out into the heart of the rising sun.

"I'm going to be a *hausfrau*," came her glad cry, "I'm going to be impeccable, I am, I am! And it's going to be delightful!"

## VIII

"A DIRECTORS' meeting, Wallie?"

"Within an hour."

"Tremendously important?"

"Awfully, Suzanne,"—he dropped



her hand, and rose from the couch where they were sitting, the determined look leaping into his face. "This morning, if I have a thing to say, they're going to put through a round half-dozen of my ideas. And there's not a whiney deplorer of my callowness among 'em but who knows I've come to have a hell of a lot to say."

"How splendid! And you'll breakfast with us, first, won't you? It's only ten o'clock."

"Can't do it. Couple of things to attend to before the meeting. I only ran in for a moment to explain things to Joan—who seemed astoundingly grumpy last night, by the way,—and to see you, of course, darling."

She ran over to him then, and slipped an arm through his. The room was alive with an April morning's sunlight. It sparkled among her curls, reflected itself from her eyes; it pervaded the room with a lustre, soft and languorous, engendered a disposition toward drowsy relaxation, an aversion to activity. Looking into her upturned face he began to fall under the spell of the indolence in the air. Together they went back to the couch, his arm slung lazily around her. She nestled at his side, her eyes, heavy-lidded through sleeplessness, blinking a lassitude which communicated itself by degrees to his. A flush slowly overspread his face. He caught her to him with a vehemence that left her breathless. Her face crimsoned as vividly as his. And a husky tremor replaced his brusqueness when at last he spoke:

"You're such a mite of a thing, old fellow. . . . Don't care personally for tall women—too obtrusive. This shoulder-to-shoulder-through-life flummery doesn't appeal. I want a little, child-like creature, who, every time you lower your head to her, will be lifting hers to you."

"Every time," she whispered, "that you happen to look down, you'll find mine lifted; I'll warrant you that, Wallie."

He held her closer, while the flush on their faces deepened. The sunlight

continued to pour its warm laziness over them. A disinclination to all endeavor, to strife, to exertion, to all things arduous, displayed itself in his hazy smile, as he leaned back among the cushions in indolent ease.

"Let the fools wait. If they don't come around to my way of thinking today, I'll make them to-morrow. What's the difference? This fine day has been provided for our sole benefit. Let's spend it together, and end up to-night with another spree. What do you say?"

"Oh, let's!"

The words came in the faintest whisper, but scarce were they spoken when she sat bolt upright, and disengaged herself from his arms. As if listening, as if calling to mind a warning, a prophecy, a something that wounded while it swayed her, she stared straight before her. The little face blanched.

"No, let's not," she said after a long stillness; there was a certain preciseness in the cheery tones. "I wouldn't have you do that for anything, not for anything in the world."

With her decision he seemed to throw off the languorous spell. More relief than regret indicated itself when he answered in his customary cool, curt fashion: "As you wish. Come to think of it, it wouldn't have been quite the sportsmanlike thing to do. One must be civil, even to the antiquated Zanies. . . . Suzanne, you're an altogether dear, and I find you inordinately pleasing."

"You're a bit pleasing, too, Wallie," she chirped.

"How placidly you say that!"

Her eyes shifted uneasily. "Did I say that placidly?"

"Like a little mother wood-pigeon."

"Wallie, do you think placidity is the first step toward deadly apathy?"

"Hell's bells! I hope not, Miss Renwick," he laughed. "Why?"

"Oh, nothing." On tiptoes she kissed him lightly. "I'll go and call Mother now. Come over as soon as you're through with the meeting. . . . And make 'em put through all your ideas,



dear. Show 'em just what a hell of a lot you have to say. Kick the antiquated Zanies into the dust-heap—only don't kick too hard, Wallie mine!"

Up the stair that only a few hours before had been so laboriously mounted she tripped as lightly as ever, but with an animation in which there lurked a faint, furtive tinge of feignedness. Will Renwick's droning voice, its boom extinguished, was borne from his room in company with the cool contralto. Unperceived, Suzanne looked in at the doorway and lingered, listening. Her mother appeared radiant and self-possessed, without a trace of fatigue on her face; her father, except for being almost ghastly in his pallor, gave no indication of his adventurous night. Completely dressed, he was preparing to leave for the office.

"Don't think I'll stop for breakfast, Joan. Several beastly matters that need attention at the mills." He yawned drearily.

"Boresome business, bread-winning, isn't it, Will?"

"Not at all, not at all," he assured her, "it's a commendable occupation for mediocrities in general."

"You're no mediocrity, Will!"

The woman lost for the nonce her light equanimity. The strain of the last few hours, so carefully concealed, broke now, when she forgot herself to the extent of flinging her arms about him in a great, clumsy embrace so unprecedented, so lacking in the easy grace that always imbued her every gesture, her every movement, as to cause him blank discomfiture. He backed away, unconsciously denying himself, exactly as Suzanne had denied herself, the night before, to the open, empty arms. The irony of unfulfillment seemed to express itself at its grimmest in the woman's awkward, ungratifying caress. By the very exquisiteness of their development, by the fine method of restraint wherewith she had plied them, potentialities for assuagement, for palliation became, in the superb Mrs. Renwick's case, anti-pathetic in their open manifestations, and almost

ridiculous to the eye. . . . The girl in the doorway shivered a little, as in foreboding.

There followed, however, a smooth retrieval. The clinging arms fell gracefully from the man's shoulders, and she moved away irradiate of her customary, unruffled charm. At once he met it with a look of quiet affection, and the rapport between them re-established itself.

"The younglings," she observed, "have had ample time for an interchange of vows. In my dual capacity of mother-in-law-to-be and unfulfilled romance, I think I'll run down to wish Wallie godspeed. Suzanne will want to tell you of her bliss, too, so wait here a moment."

Whether or not she noticed the little figure that shrank back involuntarily as she came out of the room, Mrs. Renwick passed it without turning her eyes. Serene, self-possessed, the brilliant, mocking smile in evidence, she hastened down the stairs.

Suzanne approached her father in silence. Inquiringly he looked at her, and when she remained uncommunicative he led her to a chair, drew her to his knee, and threw about her the great arm in whose embrace she had always felt at ease and happy. After some time, with a catch in her voice, she spoke.

"It—it's come with a terrific onrush, to be sure. She was right as to that."

She seemed to be pondering a momentous question during the long, silent moment that followed. When her words came, a tremulousness, only half controlled, foretold impending tears.

"Not that there's the slightest possibility of my turning out a Priscilla, or anything like that. . . ."

Another pause, and then: "Not that there's the remotest doubt but that I'm going to be impeccable, you know. . . ." The words she had cried out so joyously at sunrise resounded somewhat flatly now. And for all her glistening smile, there was a lack of spontaneity, an effect of assumed enthusiasm in her next declaration.

"It's going to be delightful, of course. No question about that, only"—for all her efforts to check them the tears brimmed her eyes—"only I feel a bit weepy—and if you don't mind . . . although it's ill-bred to cry—since no one but you will see, dear thing . . . and since there'll be time to get over it while his unfulfilled romance is wishing him Godspeed." . . .

She began to sob, in a faint, subdued way. A few preliminary tears coursed down her cheeks. Her hands, tightly clenched, trembled. But just when the

mitigant outburst was forthcoming at its fullest, she happened to look up at her father. Blurred by the tears, almost indistinguishable, there was yet so much sorrow in the great, dark eyes she saw, that a wave of pitying tenderness, blent with the distaste for scenes her training had imbued, swept over her. A tremendous effort whitened her lips, but restrained the convulsive gasps. A little reassuring lie escaped her as she clung to him:

"Crying just for the joy of the thing, you know, old boy!"



## THE MAN PURSUED BY WOMEN

By Harry Kemp

HE gave me indirectly to understand that women pursued him mercilessly.

Then after we parted, I inadvertently ran into him, that same afternoon. It was in a hotel lobby. I could tell by his manner that he was waiting there for a girl who had already kept him two hours beyond the appointed time.



## THE ORCHID

(To E. B. W.)

By Bertha Bolling

A BREEZE danced down a woodland way,  
And lingered in the shade,  
To kiss a ray of light, that lay  
In hiding, half afraid.

The light lay soft upon the breeze,  
Yielding its sweet caress—  
Lo, from that kiss, a mystery thing,  
The flower of light and air did spring,  
Trembling with loveliness!



# A MOST IMMORAL STORY

By Kingsley Moses

**M**ORALITY is a peculiar thing. To prove it to you I wish to tell a most immoral story.

Some years ago there lived in a certain large city a political boss named Ahearn. In his own bailiwick he was absolute. "What I say goes, see?" was his motto. And it went.

His lieutenant was one Hagan, blessed with a heavy thirst, two hard fists, and an overbearing manner. He was strong in his district, however, and could be depended on to get out the vote.

It happened that a hard fought election had just been won, and the Big Boss wanted to celebrate, which he did by getting handsomely drunk in Otto's place just off the avenue. A dozen or more of the crowd were along and most of them had brought their girls. The postal laws prevent a narrative of just exactly what occurred; but everyone agrees that it was a pretty wild night.

At any rate in the midst of the riot the big boss decided that his own wife ought to be pulled out of bed and introduced to the party. He was particularly proud of his wife when he was a little more than tight, and his rudimentary ideas of delicacy had escaped him.

Hagan was dispatched to summon Mrs. Ahearn, the proud husband boasting meanwhile of some of her more conspicuous charms. To his dismay Hagan brought a flat refusal from the lady. The situation was saved nevertheless by a certain healer named Isaacs who, for a price, promised to procure the presence of his own niece.

The niece, Miss Rachel, was a dutiful child, and did as her uncle commanded her. Eventually Ahearn set her up in her own flat and secured his divorce from his unappreciative spouse.

As the months went by Hagan, the lieutenant, found that Isaacs was getting too close to the big boss. Isaacs put on airs and attempted to run the district. Hagan attempted a frame-up, but Rachel put Ahearn wise; and Hagan was mixed up in a murder case that finally landed him in the chair.

At the next election Isaacs was sent to Congress; and Ahearn and Rachel lived happily ever after.

Yes; a very ugly and absolutely immoral story.

But wait a minute. For the names Ahearn, Hagan, Isaacs, and Rachel substitute Ahasuerus, Haman, Mordecai, and Esther.



**H**ISTORY seems to bear very harshly upon women. One cannot recall more than three famous women who were virtuous. But on turning to famous men the seeming injustice disappears. One would have difficulty finding even two of them who were virtuous.

## THE MAD DOG

By Van Vechten Hostetter

**B**Y and large, it had been a memorably enjoyable and profitable day.

At dawn, after a long night's sound and refreshing slumber such as only the pure in heart may enjoy, he had crawled out of his cozy home beneath the front steps of the vacant house and trotted light-heartedly across town to the river for an invigorating plunge. The water was still a trifle too cold to afford an ideal bath, for it was a late spring; but he had not complained and had come out shivering delightfully, little cleaner if any than before, perhaps, yet with heightened self-respect and with a pleasurable canine consciousness of cleanliness no less keen, and possibly more so, than that of many a high-bred and pampered pup upon emerging from his soaped and perfumed bath.

He had barked joyously and raced up and down the bank and rolled on the grass—this year's freshly green and soft as silk, last year's yellow and pleasantly rough, like a Turkish towel—until he was warm and dry and all out of breath. He had lain panting in the sun for a while, contemplating the landscape and, not impatiently, shaking off an occasional fly. Presently, recovering from his exertions, he had become conscious of keen hunger, so he had got up and hurried off to breakfast. He had long since discovered, convenient to his own home, a family that rose early, ate well and was commendably wasteful and heedless of health department rules regarding disposal of refuse. More than one elegantly fried pork chop he had found in the area behind that house. Being only a dog, he had never concerned

himself with the reason of such happy circumstances. Had he done so he would have learned that the most delectable morsels were to be had of a morning when the young woman of the household had danced the night before. Time and train wait for no commuter, even though she be a golden-haired stenographer with blue eyes and the radiant capacity to humanize a conductor and embarrass a brakeman. But even the fact of the young woman's existence, much more the beneficial effects of her pleasure-seeking upon his comestible prosperity, had escaped his curview.

Breakfast over, he had gone home to lie down, as was his habit; moving about after a meal always hindered his digestion. This morning, however, he had no more than composed himself under the front steps of the vacant house when he had been seized by severe pains in the stomach. He must have eaten too heartily or what he had taken had not agreed with him. So he had gone out and got a good dose of plantain, an abundance of which grew in the dooryard. The former tenants had not taken much pride in their lawn.

An hour or so later he had awoke in fine fettle, feeling as if he had never had an ache nor a pain, and sauntered forth eupeptically in search of diversion. He had sniffed up an acquaintance with a couple of amiable dogs, his present companions, and they had romped and tussled with much uproarious barking and yelping until they were tired out. He was not quarrelsome, and it was pleasant to find rare fellows that were strong and full

of good spirits and liked rough play, but were not looking for a fight all the time.

After a rest they had gone bone-hunting and had enjoyed unusual good luck. He had found and buried five long bones as big around as a cat's tail when the cat is not frightened, three bones of medium length and eight round flat ones with holes in them. As for small chicken bones, he had run across any number of them, more than he could possibly have buried; but he had passed them all by as not worth bothering with. His friends had made very creditable showings, though by no means equal to his own. He was not surprised; they were well-bred dogs—a Dalmatian, clean shaped and excellently spotted, and a well clad Collie,—their handsome collars and their good grooming evidencing their high degree, marking them as fortune-favored animals, not accustomed to shifting for themselves. No doubt they had slipped away from home for a lark and upon returning would be in disgrace a day or two, like a young man that has been out in a wine party all night. They being thoroughbreds, it was not to be expected that they should match his proficiency, acquired in necessity's hard school. Bone-hunting with them was a sort of jolly sport; with him it was business.

Having a deal more sense and ordinary decency of heart than many a man in his position, he did not conceive a fierce jealousy of their superiority of character and circumstances and then vainly and ridiculously attempt to disguise his envy as contempt. So far from begrudging them their good fortune and wanting to take it away from them, he rejoiced in it, not doubting that it was well deserved.

Sane dogs that they were, they recognized him as a good sort and (still being thoroughbreds), overlooked his patent heterogeneity of origin and were genuinely unconscious of the lowliness of his present estate. They did not observe that his hair while too long for a coach-dog's was too short for a

collie's or a setter's; nor yet that it was of a peculiar dead reddish brown, splotched futuristically with iron grey and dull black, and full of burs and dirt. They did not notice that his head, while well shaped, being high and fairly wide and long, was shaped like none they had ever seen at the bench shows. Had they done so they would not have failed to note that he knew how to carry it and that his were a pair of brown eyes by no manner of means to be barked at scornfully.

From the very beginning of the party the Dalmatian had entertained the hope that they would find some cats to chase. Of this the others were ignorant, for the very good reason that dogs are able to express, even to each other, only certain emotions and abstract ideas. Much as little boys that have been crammed with fiction for the sake of teaching them a few simple and inconsequential facts of natural history may be surprised to hear it, dogs do not have a language. They no more converse than they marry and divorce and get drunk and write letters to the newspapers and join political marching clubs and sign petitions and offer to fight for their country and try to get out of paying taxes for it.

So the Dalmatian was hoping every minute that they would run across some cats. The plebeian had no such desire. He had never engaged in a cat chase and he had no intention of so doing. Not that he was restrained by devotion to any superethical code; he had never taken the pains to examine the moral aspects of the sport; nor yet that he was afflicted shamefully with an unnatural tenderness for felinity; he was a quite normal dog for all he was one of more than ordinary intellect. It simply was a pastime he did not fancy, as deer hunting is a form of entertainment in which some men find it impossible to become interested. For him there was no sport without a contest.

Cats as he knew them, though not without certain very conspicuous personal charms, were suspiciously clean, and he had observed that while they

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frequently presented a picture of maid-only guilelessness and rather pathetic helplessness they were forever sharpening their claws. They did not annoy him, however, and he was content to pursue the even tenor of his way, indifferent to their existence.

Now as the trio swung round a corner they came precipitately upon a huge Persian cat tranquilly sunning her immaculate and snowy self on the walk. She had not heard their approach, for she was deaf, a lamentable weakness that had run in her family for generations. She was a rare creature the like of which the plebeian dog had never before set eyes on. A true lover of the beautiful, he stopped in his tracks, caught his breath and, cocking his head, regarded her surpassing loveliness with frankly admiring eye.

But he was permitted only a few blessed moments. His companions, barking a battle cry, leaped forward, and in an instant would have pounced upon the radiant animal. Does Zo-roaster yet guard his anointed? Whether or not his spirit, eternal, willed for that superb head to turn and those glorious liquid eyes see the danger, certain it is that it turned, with the slow majesty of a queen's. She was away in a flash, a quivering streak of white against the gray cement, the coach dog and the collie racing, tearing in pursuit, straining muscles with every ounce of energy the savage fury of the chase, the primeval lust for feline blood could generate, their hard nails clicking, rasping *prestissimo* on the rough stone.

Their philosophic friend loped leisurely after, interested, but moderately so, and desirous of nothing more than to know the result of the race. Of that he should have had no doubt. Nearing the end of a block, the Persian turned her course to a gently rising lawn and in another instant he saw her safe in the branches of a tall tree, looking down contemptuously upon her foiled pursuers, barking ferociously and leaping impotently toward her.

Just as he arrived upon the imme-

diate scene the door of the house was opened and appeared a sharp-featured woman, who cried out in shrill militancy against the harriers. There was no mistaking the meaning of her tone. The Dalmatian and the collie turned and fled precipitately, the celerity of their ignominious retreat being equal to that of their recent pursuit. The common dog regarded the woman with half amused interest. He was so utterly innocent that it did not occur to him to fly, even when she began to descend the steps and he saw that she was armed with a wicked-looking whip. But the woman came on and as she neared him and he saw the mad fury in her eyes he realized that she was determined to have a victim whether that victim be innocent or guilty. Still he stood there, with superb sticism or stupidity, not bowing his head in shame, but raising it calmly, like an Epictetus, to meet the blow. A man's heavy voice called out in hurried remonstrance behind him and the woman paused, looking up and beyond him in surprise, her hard face softening a little. Turning, he saw that the man was now quite near him and that he was a much pleasanter person to look upon than the woman with the whip. On his way here he had passed a man; this probably was the same one, though he could not be sure, for in his hurry he had not stopped to look at the man.

There ensued a colloquy that, while it was all English to the dog, plainly had him for one of its subjects. The man smiled frankly and spoke in a tone of gentle but firm assurance; the woman's voice softened gradually until it was almost as a woman's voice should be. Sometimes they looked into each other's faces, sometimes at him and again up at the cat. The man, speaking earnestly, would extend an upturned palm toward the dog while he looked into the woman's eyes; then the woman's eyes would flash and she would stamp her foot and raise an arm with a sharp finger in the direction of the cat. After a long while the woman smiled and said something—and

now her voice was quite as a woman's should be—that evidently ended the conversation to the entire satisfaction of both, for the man bowed respectfully and gratefully and lifted his hat and the woman, still smiling, turned away and moved back toward the house. The man looked down at the dog and smiled and the dog looked up at the man and smiled as well as he could and wagged his tail warmly. The man knew about what the dog would have said had he been able to speak. The dog knew with what broad sympathy the man would have wagged his tail if he had had one. He knew the man had interceded for him and saved him a beating and he was grateful, so he followed his advocate away.

Night had fallen and the man's step had grown weary before they reached the little house and the man, fumbling in his pocket, found a key and let them in at last. After he had made a light the man dropped into a chair and sank back in it, closing his eyes and folding his hands in his lap. The dog lay down between his outstretched feet and looked up steadily, studying the man. His was a large, square, firm but kindly face, a sober face, a troubled one, though not despairing. The man's hands were big and rough. His raiment was coarse and ill fitting and ill-kempt, like the dog's. After a long time the man opened his eyes and leaned forward, as if to rise, and for the first time he realized he was not alone. His eyes widened with glad surprise. He smiled kindly. Then he reached down and as the dog rose on his hind legs his paws went up to meet the big, welcoming hands.

The man's dark eyes looked long into the dog's, and presently the man spoke, kindly, sympathetically, generously. The dog knew that the man was offering to be his master and his friend. That was all. What the man really said was:

"Old man, I don't know you very well, but I think I know you well enough. You're not a handsome fel-

low—maybe that's why I like you, because we like to find our shortcomings in other people and worship them as virtues,—but I think you are good for something. Anyway, you seem to know what gratitude is. I do like you, old man. I think you will be a good friend and a faithful friend. I'll try to be one, too. You have the advantage, though. You're only a dog—but I'm only a man. You know, I've got a notion that if I were a dog I'd be a good deal like you. I can think of you as the dog John Laird. Of course, there are differences—all on your side. You don't know who made you and don't care. I wonder who made me and wonder what for. I think I'll have to name you for myself. I think I shall have to call you John. It's a good name."

## II

ONLY literary dogs, who write autobiographies, mark the passing of time and count days and months and years. John did not know how long they had lived in the little house before they left it, as he knew, for the last time, but it was long enough for him to learn to love it as home, and in leaving he was not happy. Yet he did not complain. It was the thing to be done, and they were doing it. Some of the pictures had been removed already, and men were carrying out the books and the furniture and putting them in a wagon.

Life in the little house had been ideal. The master had gone away every morning after having made breakfast for the two of them, and John had been left to his own devices for amusement. (Certainly there had been exceptional days, grand days worth remembering and worth looking forward to, when he had not gone away, and they had strolled in the town or roamed the woods.) In the evening he had returned and made another meal. In the hours after he had sat with his books or with his papers, and John had lain at his feet. He was a

silent man, but there was little need for speech. Just to be with him had been enough for John, to lie there at his feet and look up at him and watch him and at last to fall asleep.

Of late John Laird had been absent much at night and the evening had been lonely, but John had not questioned nor remonstrated. He had suggested accompanying his master, but he would not have it so, and John had submitted to the new arrangement without complaint.

When, after a long ride, the master took him to a great house in which there were more dogs than he had ever seen before and left him there he was disconsolate and could not be comforted. It was hard to be away from the little house, harder still to be denied the master. Yet he knew he was not deserted, and when the first poignant grief had passed he came to bear the separation more courageously. He began to eat with his old-time regularity and the thousand and one different sorts of dogs were interesting enough to keep his mind occupied, though his heart was still hungry.

John Laird came for him at last. He barked with joy and wagged his tail until it seemed it must fly off. He leaped into his master's arms, and John Laird hugged him close and their hearts throbbed and pounded together. In his excess of emotion he forgot his training and licked John Laird's face with his hot tongue and John Laird himself forgot that that was something a good dog, a gentleman, should never do.

It was not until he was down on the ground again that he saw the master was not alone. John Laird turned to his companion and smiled at her and spoke to her, and then looked down again. The words John could not understand, but he could comprehend the tone, and the smile and he knew the man was proud of the greeting he had given. The young woman stooped and patted his head with a slender gloved and perfumed hand, calling him by his name and bestowing a gracious and kindly

smile. His tail, which had been almost still, now wagged with gallant devotion; his eyes looked an honest response to her sympathetic greeting and caress. She was beautiful—a dainty, girlish young woman, pink and white of skin, with yellow hair and blue eyes,—as fair and delicate as the man was dark and big and strong.

The three went away together and in the evening he was established with them and happier than he had ever been before in the little old house.

### III

THE new home was larger and a far more beautiful place in which to live than the one he had known before. To be sure, there was no grass anywhere near it, and the street in front was rarely clear of inhuman street-cars and automobiles and trucks (one must be forever alert here); still, it was a wonderful home, and the young woman was very kind to him. She kept him reasonably clean, though not unnaturally so, having the intelligence to appreciate that a dog must be a dog, and that it is better for him to have the clean, wholesome smell of a dog than the delicate perfume of the violet or sandalwood.

She fried pork chops specially for him and did it admirably. There was something vaguely familiar about these pork chops, as if he had enjoyed others very much like them, though not exactly, far back in the dim past, in the days when he was accustomed to go foraging for his daily bread. They were delicious.

The master was away all day, and when he returned at night John barked and wagged his tail and pawed at the master's legs. The master picked the mistress up in his arms and hugged and kissed her as if she were a little girl and her face grew more pink and she was very happy. After dinner the man sat with the mistress in his arms and they read or talked. John lay on the floor and watched them devotedly for hours until it was bed time and

another day had been well lived. Other nights—and he was glad they were not many—the master and the mistress went out and he lay on the floor alone, waiting patiently as he could for their return. It was worth the waiting, for they came always laughing and happy and with warm “Hello, John’s” and pats on the head and back and candy.

A time came when the master went away alone at night. The woman protested and John joined her. The master did not wish to go, but he shook his head, a little sadly, and after he had spoken very tenderly to the mistress he kissed her and was gone, leaving her in John’s devoted care. The mistress wept and John, lying at her feet, sympathized and longed to speak, but he was dumb. When she had gone to bed he lay outside her door until very late to greet his master silently. These nights became more frequent, and John Laird looked weary and worn when he returned, but he never failed to answer John’s warm welcome and commend his faithfulness.

One night at dinner time there came home with the master a strange man. At the sight of him John uttered a low growl. On the instant he had conceived an intense dislike for this newcomer, something that approached hatred, though it was not that. John Laird looked down at him with surprise and disappointment. He trotted away contritely. He knew the stranger was the man’s friend and for that he wanted to love him, yet he was disposed to growl and it was only by dint of the most heroic effort that he kept silence.

After dinner the master endeavored to reconcile him to the visitor, but it was of no use. John Laird spoke to him sharply and was plainly irritated, but John, reluctant as he was to disobey or wound his master, could not play the hypocrite. There was no reason in his aversion. The man was an agreeable person to look upon—almost as tall as the master, but slender and light of complexion; his hands were smooth and white and his face was

more cheerful and care-free than the master’s. He was smiling always and he laughed, without any bitterness, at John’s coldness. The woman laughed, too, and after a while John Laird’s irritation vanished and John was forgotten. The three laughed merrily and talked all evening and the master and the mistress paid no more attention to John until the guest was gone.

In the time that followed John Laird’s friend became a frequent visitor and welcome to all but John. John knew this, and was ashamed, but when Frank, as the man came to be known to him, was present he could do nothing but lie in the shadows and eye him with suspicious eyes.

Occasionally John Laird would kiss the woman and go away at night, leaving her there with Frank, and all three would laugh as he went. Frank would remain until late, often until the master returned. They would shake hands warmly and smile, but the weariness always showed through John Laird’s smile. Frank was never weary.

These occasions became more and more frequent and there were many days when Frank came, always to be greeted gladly by the woman. In time John came to know Frank almost as a member of the household, though his attitude toward him refused to be changed. Presently John had no memory of a time when he had not known Frank.

One day, just after Frank had gone away, the master came and spoke to the mistress as he had never spoken before. He was greatly agitated and paced up and down the floor, twisting his hands together, sometimes stopping and looking at the woman helplessly. She made no answer to anything he said, just sat and looked at him. John was miserable. He did not know why, except that something was happening that must make one miserable.

At last the man got his hat and moved toward the door. He seemed to be very, very tired. John did not recall ever before having seen him so



tired. He walked after the master, having a mind to go with him, but John Laird stopped and said something to him that meant he should remain, so he looked submission and remained.

## IV

THE master did not return, and it was a long time before John found him, a tiring trot away, in a wretchedly small house, set far away from any others. He was much changed. His face was white and drawn and the arms that held John to his breast were not so strong as they had been once. His voice, though, was the same gentle, friendly voice. John could not understand the words that poured from his thin lips, only he knew the master was glad to see him again. He knew the master was sick, knew his place was by his side, and meant to stay there; but after a while the master bade him go and when he had pleaded in vain to stay he went obediently. It was the thing to do.

The woman fed him now, though not with the willingness and care of old. She spoke to him seldom and he realized miserably that the love she had given him was his no more. Frank was almost always at the house, almost at every meal. What they left was his, given almost with the contempt that bread is given to a beggar; there was always enough, and he was never hungry, but there were no fried pork chops. Soon he had no memory of them.

Almost every day he would make that long journey across the great town, fear in his heart at every crossing where he must pick and dodge his way among a hundred vehicles, to the house of his master to spend one perfect hour in silent communion with him and then obediently to go away again.

One day he went there and when he scraped his paw on the door, as was his custom, there was no response. The master must be asleep. He pawed harder and barked at the top of his voice and still there was no answer. He scraped with all his strength, trying to

tear open the door, whimpering a dog's prayer. Two or three men passed him. One made a remark and then there was laughter, but of all this he knew nothing. Presently fear of a vague something, the nature of which was utterly beyond him, seized him and he lay down on the step and moaned and cried as he had never done before. A man, hearing him, came and watched for a while and finally smashed down the door. They went in. There sat the master in his chair, his hands folded, his eyes closed, his face whiter than John had ever seen it before. He leaped up on his breast and licked his face. It was cold. He stopped and looked long at the face. Then, without knowing why or wondering why, he got down, went out and took his way slowly, mournfully back across the town to the woman's home.

## V

IN a little while the room that had been the master's was Frank's. The woman was little changed. She was young and fair and full of laughter, and was to Frank as she had been to the master. The days and the nights were as the old days and nights had been. John lay on the floor, watching the woman devotedly and the man hatefully. They ignored him. His hatred grew more bitter, but he never growled. He gave no expression to what was in his heart, and if he had it probably would not have been noticed.

The time came when Frank, too, went out alone at night. John watched his mistress and knew that she was ill at ease. He would have gone up and licked her hands or done something to comfort her, but he felt his solicitousness would be unwelcome and he refrained.

When she retired he lay down outside her door, as was his wont, and waited, but not for love of the man for whom he waited. It was very late, much later than John Laird had ever come, when Frank arrived. Then



John hated him most bitterly. There seemed something strange about him, something unnatural, something that made John shudder, though he was not afraid. Frank's face was always flushed and his eyes too bright and sometimes his walk was unsteady. One night he moved toward the door of the woman's room. John's muscles grew tense as he crouched and growled a low, forbidding growl. Frank turned away and swayed into his own room.

One evening he went away and did not return, and the next day he did not come, nor for many days. The woman's face, which had been sad, grew old and John knew, though how he did not know, that she was undergoing torture in her heart.

One day she sat by the table, twisting her hands, and her face was nothing like the face she had first shown him. As he watched her tears came into her eyes. Then timidly he went over to her and lay down at her feet, touching them. She felt him there. Crying his name in anguish, she caught him up in her arms and held him to her breast, burying her face in his rough, dirty hair and sobbing. Many words she cried and they meant nothing to him, but ever and ever again she sobbed his name and that he understood. His heart beat wildly. He was serving her and even in his sympathetic misery he was happy in that service.

At last she put him down and ran into her room, he at her heels to give her more comfort. But she slammed the door in his face, and as he stood there stupidly, not knowing what to do now, there was a sound like the sound of a policeman's revolver, in the room. In a minute the house was full of people, men with serious faces, women with frightened faces, some shouting, some wailing, some whispering, some standing with mouths open foolishly. Policemen came and opened the door. He went into the room with them and looked at the woman. Her face was covered with blood. He knew she was

dead. Sick at heart, he went out and away. All night and the next day he ran on at a dog trot, not thinking, not reasoning, only desiring to get away, far, far away. And the next night he trotted on until at last he crawled into his old bed in the dirt beneath the steps of the vacant house and fell there to the sleep of exhaustion.

## VI

Dogs do not mark the passing of time, but he had been so long living the old life that the master and the mistress and Frank were dim memories. The family that had thrown away the delicious pork chops he had never found again, but he had found others and he had lived.

To-day, as on one so long before—of which he had no recollection—he had sauntered forth in search of what the world might have to offer. He was on his way to the heart of the town, where were more people and hence greater possibilities of entertainment. He swung round a corner rather quickly with his head down, and before he could stop he had almost run against the legs of two persons on the walk. He threw himself back on his haunches and looked up. They were a girl—he saw her first,—a very young girl, little more than a child, and a man. The man was Frank. John uttered a growl of triumphant hate and leaped at his throat. Frank struck wildly at him with his cane. He missed. He shrieked and the cry died in a gurgle as John's teeth, hard and sharp and merciless, sank into his throat. The girl screamed and ran. Frank, stepping back hopelessly to save himself, stumbled and fell. John's jaws opened and closed again. He braced his forelegs on the pavement at either side of the man's neck and shook his head, like a terrier killing a rat.

In a minute he knew his work was done. He knew that all the shouting, coming nearer now, could avail Frank nothing. He turned and ran down the

street, a crowd of men and boys after him, yelling and shouting like mad. He did not understand their words, but he knew they wanted his life. Of course, what they were yelling was, "Mad dog!" He knew he was distancing them, but a policeman was running toward him. As they neared each other John stopped and stood perfectly still, looking up into the man's face.

The policeman halted with a look of surprise, took hurried aim and fired. The bullet crashed into the dog's skull between the eyes.

\* \* \* \* \*

The animal's head was sent to the Pasteur Institute to be examined. It was not long before the experts reported that the dog had not been mad.



## WHY THE WAVES ARE WILD

By William Sanford

THEY sat near me on the golden sand. The man was a heavy-jowled, red-faced fellow. I remembered him. He was among those who laid brick at the building of my new house.

The woman weighed about three hundred pounds. Her face was also very red, and the skin blotched in places. Her hair was a shade brighter than her face, and decidedly frowsy and unkempt. Her hands were large

and speckled, and her eyes—very small—seemed to be of a sort of sea-green.

Perspiration poured from her features, although the afternoon was not unduly warm.

They were lovers. I could see that. Suddenly he leaned toward her, the better to exhibit a curious shell which he had gathered, and I heard him whisper her name.

It was Violet.



## ENVY

By William G. Wedge

IT is not for her American dollars, nor her French motor-cars, nor her German police-dogs, nor her Italian paintings, nor her Chinese pottery that I envy her. No;—while these are much, I do not begrudge her them. But I do feel lowly and envy her for that English way she has of looking through people without seeing them.



# THE REALIST

By James Shannon

HE was a realist. He wrote for certain exclusive publications that were edited by young men with Van Dyke beards and missions. The men in his books were generally drunk, and the Brute in them was always close to the surface.

Swinging up from the studio of an artist friend in Washington Square, where he had been dining, he dropped into Fransioli's to sip a glass of chianti with the advanced thinkers and artists, exponents of Naturalism and the Brute-in-man theory, who made the picturesque little eating-place their headquarters. And it was not long before he was airing his philosophy of life and his views on art.

"One has to get down to raw, crude life," he orated, waving his monogrammed cigarette through the smoke, "before one can really see into the heart of things. Life is not pretty; it is sordid, petty, commonplace. But to see life clearly and as a whole we must look it in the face. We must see the ragged underwear as well as the silk stockings." He paused an impressive moment, then continued. "It is the inability to see things as they are that constitutes the greatest impediment to woman's intellectual development. A woman looks at everything through a golden haze of romance and poetry; her mind has a sentimental squint that distorts every object that comes within range of her vision. It is small wonder that the female sex has not produced a single great poet, painter, or musician!" He glanced at his watch, shrugged his shoulders, and reached for his hat.

The Realist arrived home shortly

after seven o'clock, for he was a model husband. His wife was sitting before the fire. She was a dainty little blonde, all lace and silks and pretty ways. She had a delicate, pouting mouth, and she loved magazine stories of impossible romance. The Realist kissed her affectionately and deposited himself in a fathomless Morris chair. Ruminating with complacency over his utterances at Fransioli's, he bantered her gently, as was his custom, upon her sofa-pillow attitude toward life. She smiled back at him from her wicker chair and continued to sew up a rent in his winter flannels. He said her philosophy could be summed up in a chocolate cream. She laughed softly at the expression, and noting that his complexion was slightly muddy resolved to make him take his castor oil.

He put on his velvet coat for writing and withdrew to his den, where he found paper and pen spread out on the gleaming mahogany desk. The room was tinted a light gray. On the wall hung a Greuze head and a Watteau landscape. There was a fire in the grate which muttered and sang to itself in a cheerful undertone. The Realist seated himself at the desk, gazed at the single yellow jonquil that lifted its languid head from the vase before him, and with a flourish of the pen inscribed the title of his essay: "On the Lack of a Realistic Faculty in Women."

In another room his wife was putting the baby to bed. She tucked the blankets about his chubby feet and kissed him good-night. Turning down the light she tip-toed out of the room. In a few minutes she was busy washing diapers.

# THE NOCTURNAL NEW YORKER

By Charles King Van Riper

I  
TO see New York in all its levantine gaudiness was the passion of Pauline Brent. Pauline was born in Xenia, O., an unfortified town in the sex hygiene and Harold Bell Wright belt, and by the simple fact she had exhausted one of the three possibilities of life there. The second possibility, holy marriage, she had emptied by her union to Philip Brent, manager of the vacuum-cleaner factory. There remained only death, and to death she looked forward with little gusto. All her thoughts centered upon a penultimate event, to be sandwiched gloriously between No. 2 and No. 3: a visit, to wit, to mad, mad Manhattan, the capital of Life in all its happier phases, the Paris of our fair republic, the Babylon of her dreams.

Not for Pauline were Grant's Tomb, the Bronx Zoo and the Woolworth Building. These cheap marvels she handed over to the rube, the rubberneck, the victim of Chautauqua *Kultur*. The New York she proposed to know (as she already loved and venerated it) was not of salmon brick and structural iron all compact, but a thing of infinite delicacies and nuances, a compound of thrills and diversions, a confection of men and manners. She wanted to turn out of the hard plank road of Xenian humdrum, of Presbyterian propriety, of bourgeois stodginess, into the inviting fields of poppy and asphodel. She wanted to rub noses with Folly, to sip the electric *vin rouge* of Bohemia, to mingle easily with the mad mummers of Broadway. She yearned for a draught of Civilization, a glimpse of Life.

Not all of these heretical desires were

confided to Philip, her husband, but he knew in a general way what path her aspirations took, and he was not averse himself to gratifying them. A man of mechanical and statistical bent, he, too, looked longingly toward certain prodigies of the Big Town. For one thing, the Hudson and Pennsylvania tubes awoke in him an admiring passion. He knew that it had taken 3,567,543,201 bags of cement to build them, and that their homicidal third rails carried 8,250 volts. He knew, again, that the Singer Tower swayed 1.06 feet in a 40-mile wind. He knew, yet again, that 37,652 persons passed the corner of Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street every hour of every week-day, from 8.30 A. M. to 6.15 P. M. Of these marvels he had gained knowledge from his favorite journal, the *Scientific American*, and he craved a sight of them. Beside, he had heard much talk of Coney Island, and wanted to inspect the ingenious machines for jolting, bumping, flogging, rowelling, flinging, flooring, flipping and otherwise bemusing the populace.

Out in Xenia, the midday dinner done and the afternoon drowsiness upon her, Pauline dreamed of the day when the great restaurants should know her, and she should meet their celebrities eye to eye. She dreamed of Diamond Jim Brady, Flo Zeigfeld, Geraldine Farrar, Vincent Astor, Mayor Mitchel, George M. Cohan, Valeska Surratt. She dreamed of Jack's, Bustanoby's, Healy's, the Claridge, the Knickerbocker, the Plaza, the Biltmore roof, the Ritz, the Beaux-Arts. She dreamed of wine, cigarettes, mayonnaise, fox-trots, Hungarian orchestras, liqueurs, taxicabs, roof-gardens, the Follies. And



into her dreams, one day at 3.10 P. M., walked Philip with the news that the vacuum-cleaner factory had sudden business in New York (the Allies requiring 10,000 machines for their trenches), and that he, Philip, would have to see to it.

That was as far as he got.

"We have just thirty-four minutes to make the Manhattan Express," exclaimed Pauline, who knew by heart the time-table effective at 12 M., November 31. "I'll be ready in ten."

Phil, with the situation taken quite out of his hands, followed as she rushed upstairs to their joint chamber. So complete was Pauline's happiness that she never thought of complaining that she had nothing to wear. The packing was a marvel of efficiency and speed. Within twenty minutes they made an expeditious exit from the house, bound for New York.

Pullman seats were available as far as Pittsburgh. After that—well, things might be arranged. With the aid of the porter they disposed themselves and went through the ritual of queries about unlocked doors and windows and open faucets. Soon, however, Phil was deep in his copy of *Popular Mechanics*, and Pauline, ostensibly occupied with the all-star fiction number of—but why mention names?—began a systematic appraisal of her fellow passengers.

## II

As the poet Maeterlinck has observed, the book of life is a loose-leaf volume, and people on journeys are the unbound leaves. Pauline read them with what might, if one were so minded, be called quick comprehension and keen grasp. On the right, and to the front, was a buyer from Kokomo. He couldn't be anything else. In the chair adjoining his was a nomadic wealthy aunt who flitted from branch to branch of the family tree and was everywhere welcome—*pro tem*. The solitary traveling bag of the middle-aged man and woman across the aisle was marked Muncie. Pauline heard the man be-

hind her telling his you-couldn't-be-mistaken wife about the crimes of the Evansville Board of Trade. "State of Michigan" was blazoned on a legal paper that was being scowled at by a white-haired man with a brief-case on his knee.

At Pittsburgh the Brents got berths in another car. In the morning the opening curtains of the sleeper revealed to Pauline a completely new set of characters; new, that is, as individuals, but of the same species as her car-fellows of the preceding day. Their baggage or their faces bore the stencils of Piqua, Bucyrus, Terre Haute and Vandalia. In the washroom, Phil met a man from Brazil, Ind. Their wives must meet. They did. The Brazilian pointed out a rather rotund man as the leading banker of Greenville, Ind. Then as the train rushed across Jersey the men fell to discussing . . .

Terminal porters flung themselves on the grip-laden Phil, but he would have none of them, resolutely and repeatedly requesting directions for reaching a hostelry to which he had been recommended. He found out—after a while. As Phil was registering, Pauline discovered that the Robertsons, acquaintances from Columbus, were stopping at the same place. By the time Phil had finished his business for the day, Pauline had located Mrs. Robertson and arrangements for making a night of it were well under weigh.

## III

At last the great adventure was at hand. Pauline thrilled to the thought as she stood before her glass, adding a final dab of powder to her nose. Within a few minutes she would be of the tide that eddied and very-good-eddied in Broadway. She looked from the window. From the street rose the dull, magnificent roar of metropolitan traffic. Two taxicabs collided with a sharp, glassy crash. Somewhere below the street level an explosion of dynamite hurled a stoical Italian through a two-

inch plank. The deafening, abominable whistle of a fire-engine cut into the turmoil of trolley and ambulance gongs. Policeman shouted to policeman. A street-piano in a side-street played "Tipperary" and "Nearer, My God To Thee." Something fell off a roof. A woman screamed. Two more taxicabs fought out their endless enmity. Upon Pauline's ears the noises of the town fell as sweet music. She was listening to the siren song of the city. This, at last, was life.

At the restaurant where Phil and the Robertsons elected to dine she sat almost in silence, soaking up the atmosphere of the modern Nineveh. At the next table a distinguished-looking man in evening dress drank seven *Bénédictines* in rapid succession. Pauline set him down a wealthy debauchée, a hunter of working girls. Presently a short, fat man in yellowish tweeds stopped at his table and addressed him. "How's business in Allentown?" asked the fat man. It gave Pauline a start. She suffered another a moment later, when a scrap of conversation from the table behind her reached her ears. One man, unseen, was arguing with another man—also unseen—that his tomato patch at Shoreham was the finest on Long Island. Then, too, she heard a man who paused, in going out, explain to his companion that the red-haired man who sang in the cabaret was a law student from Union Hill, N. J. She felt instinctively that Union Hill was some outlandish village far removed from Manhattan. Such is woman's intuition!

The show to which the Brents and Robertsons repaired was really quite a worthy entertainment, so much so that it frequently diverted the attention of Pauline from the audience. Between the acts, however, she industriously checked up the occupants of the orchestra circle and boxes. That Mrs. Robertson noticed this was evidenced by her:

"My dear, I can't imagine anything so fascinating as studying people, can you?"

"No," breathed Pauline, and Mrs. Robertson returned to the reading of the "What Women Will Wear" column of her program.

As luck would have it, Pauline found in the man and woman directly in front her ideal of the typical New York couple. The woman was exquisitely dressed. The man was immaculate in evening clothes. Pauline's heart warmed to them. Alas, in the last intermission the man produced the folder of a suburban railroad and drew out his watch! They left just before the mystery around which the play had been built was about to be unraveled. Pauline felt as if something had gone out of her life.

But the supreme delight was to come. Phil, the dear, had reserved tables for the Wee Hours' Whirl—dancing until the performance began at midnight. Pauline's spirits soared with the elevator that bore them roofward. Nocturnal New York, at last! Here she would be in the very midst of the incomparable taxi-cabaret life of the metropolis. Here she would see the celebrities of whom she had heard and read so long. Here she would see millionaires with their chorus girls, and opera singers with their accompanists, and perhaps even the eminent Brady with his precious stones. Here was Life.

In a space surrounded on three sides by tables and on the fourth by a curtained stage, dancers were swaying to the barbaric rhythm of strident string music, throbbing brass and rattling drums. A haze of blue smoke hung in the air, ice clinked in glasses, waiters whisked to and (need it be said?) fro; the air was redolent with rare-bits, rich with wines. This was New York!

They made their way to a table. Pauline felt somehow that the waiter sensed the fact that they were outsiders. When they were settled, she began her inspection. On first entering she had not noticed a table at which some twenty men were seated. Almost at the moment she corrected this over-

sight one of the men discovered Phil. He rose and came right over.

"Hardware salesmen's convention in the city," he explained. "This is the bunch from Ohio. See you when I make Xenia again."

"Xenia!" It made Pauline shudder.

"There's that banker from Greenville," observed Phil, and called on Pauline for confirmation. It was, and he was with another man. Beyond them Pauline espied the Michigan lawyer with a sedate sort of woman who didn't warrant further study. Another table accommodated the folks from Brazil, who acknowledged the Brents' bows. The people from Muncie shared a table with the Evansville board-of-trader and his wife.

The performance gave Pauline opportunity for a careful scrutiny of the audience. Anon she became aware that other eyes were also roving about, that there were other peekers and gapers there. A disquieting suspicion began to stir within her. She knew that many of the persons present were from her own hinterland. What of the others? Could it be that—? Her uneasy reflections met a sudden check. She experienced the uncomfortable sensation of being gazed at. After a moment of indecision, she turned. The eyes of a man in the furthest corner were on her. She felt uneasy. He had a strong, lean-cheeked face. There was a touch of gray at his temples. Pauline wished he would look away. She averted her own eyes. The curtain was just going down. As she talked of commonplaces, she squirmed inwardly under that sharp scrutiny. The orchestra swung into a one-step.

The Robertsons rose to dance. Phil excused himself to speak to the hardware salesman. Pauline was alone.

Without looking around she knew that the sinister eyes were still upon her. And to think that she had begun to doubt the existence of the nocturnal New Yorker! She darted a quick glance over her shoulder. The man was walking toward her. It was too awful! Pauline caught a willful wisp of hair and patted it into place. She was conscious of someone standing beside her. She looked up.

The man's lips parted over even teeth in a smile that Pauline would have accepted as genuine if she had not known that the falseness of such smiles lies in their apparent ingenuousness. She knew perfectly well that she was blushing.

"Your pardon," said the man—Pauline stopped breathing in that delicious suspense of anticipation's climax—"But aren't you from Xenia?"

Pauline gasped. "Y-e-s," she faltered.

"That was my home for a while about seven years ago. You're Pauline Berkely, aren't you?"

"I was. I'm Mrs. Brent now. And—you—you're Bert Huston, who used to work at Kramer's soda fountain!" Pauline held out her hand. "What are you doing here?"

"If you mean New York, I'm managing a chain of drug stores. If you mean this particular spot—it's just a habit I've gotten into." Huston paused, reflecting. "Every once in a while I hit up the restaurants and cabarets just for the sake of getting back among home folks."



THE tragedy of women lies in the fact that they distrust men in general but not always in particular.



## THE ETERNAL MR. SMITH

By Winthrop Parkhurst

MR. DREW SMITH had always been uncompromisingly puritanical in his attitude toward marriage. Perhaps it was ancestry that accounted for his moral bias: his father and mother were Quakers and had entered matrimony with the secret belief that it was just a little bit indecent. Perhaps it was merely an ingrained habit of long standing, like his habit of brushing his teeth twice a day, or his habit of turning out his feet at a ridiculous angle when he walked, or his habit of chewing the ends of his mustache during moments of intense mental concentration. Perhaps, again, it was neither of these, but lay wholly in the fact that his wife Clarice was an exceptionally attractive woman and infidelity of any sort would have been at once silly and pointless. Who can tell? The strands of one's moral nature are rooted in strange and unexpected places; and virtue as well as vice blooms often in an unpromising climate.

At any rate, Mr. Smith considered that he had ideals. The immaculateness of his relations with his wife was one of those ideals; it had always been one of them; and he intended that it was always going to be one of them. Other men might strain surreptitiously at the halter of matrimony. Other men (some of whom he knew personally) might, and indeed did, find temporary happiness outside their own domiciles. But Drew Smith was not of their ilk. He shrank involuntarily from such common excursions into infidelity as marked the careers of some of his best friends. He shrank even from hearing about them. And until he met Trenka—Trenka of the wondrous black hair

and soft white hands—it may be honestly said that, during ten years of a happily married existence, he had never so much as gazed for five seconds into another woman's eyes, or touched another woman's hand save for the conventional and necessary purposes of greeting. His wife Clarice was sufficient for him. All other women were superfluous, absolutely foreign to his scheme of living. At most they were bits of chaste decoration on the background of a pretty landscape—creatures who meant no more to his soul than the painted flying nymphs which faced him every morning from the bottom of his oatmeal saucer.

But philosophies are made as easily as they are unmade, and a woman's hands can tie strange and terrible knots in the banner of one's faith. Drew Smith refused to acknowledge, for a long time after his first encounter with Trenka that she was insinuating herself into his life to a dangerous degree. He refused even to consider that she was insinuating herself into his life at all. It was true that she was moderately pretty, that she had a pleasant manner and a nice smile, just as it was true that when she returned his change to him and held out the bunch of flowers he had purchased from her their hands often unconsciously met and lingered for an instant. He was honest enough to confess that the contact was not at all displeasing to his senses; that he even, rather ridiculously, liked the touch of her soft, smooth skin. But a flower girl—pooh! Though he had had the instincts of a veritable Don Juan, the mere idea must have rejected itself automatically.

That habit and ancestry should have



fortified his position to a point of almost complete impregnability, would doubtless make a pretty theme for moralists. In a sense, of course, ten years of uneventful life with any woman are apt to inspire in the man sufficient placidity of soul to render sex skirmishes relatively uninteresting. And there is nothing like a wood-fire and a pair of slippers for drawing in the adventurous talons of the male. But, conversely, as any good horticulturist will attest, there is also no surer way of forcing a normal plant into an abnormal growth than by putting it under glass and keeping it there. Mr. Smith's life, it must not be inferred, was a hot-house affair, and Clarice was a careful gardener. Sometimes, indeed, Smith felt dimly that she was too careful a gardener. And, to preserve the figure, he was inclined to resent being so scrupulously tended and watered each day. It hurt his dignity a little. More, it hurt his sense of masculine possessorship. One is, to a certain extent, dependent on one's slaves, but one is not obliged to submit to their advice on the weight of one's underwear.

"Oh, but Drewy, dear," remonstrated his wife, one bright spring morning, "you're not going to put *those* on, today!" Then she added, tactfully, "Are you?"

Mr. Smith, dangling the abjured articles incriminatingly over his left arm as he stood in front of the open chiffonier drawer, admitted that he had had some thoughts of putting them on. The first of April was his regular day for changing from winter to summer underwear, and he could see no legitimate reason for upsetting a life-long habit simply because the weather was inconsiderate enough to be a little chilly. He submitted in the end, of course. There was nothing else to do. But all the rest of the week—it was Wednesday—he fussed and fumed under the fret of enforced, and, to his mind, totally unnecessary flannels.

Now it must not be supposed that it was such minor domestic annoyances as this which irked his soul and made

life, if not unbearable, at least vaguely unsatisfactory. Drew Smith could find no objective fault with the world. Indeed, he had not the slightest idea as to what it was that was gradually filling him with such strange discontents that, on some days, work at the office became for him a complete impossibility. All he knew was that he was rapidly becoming the prey to a terrible and disrupting restlessness—a restlessness such as he had never before suffered in the whole course of his life. He put it down at once to spring fever; he put it down to indigestion; then, successively, he put it down to almost everything under the sun. The only thing he did not actually put it down to was its true cause. To put it down to that he did not dare.

Thus, when on a certain April afternoon he caught himself crossing Mallory street, and it dawned suddenly on his consciousness that he had been crossing Mallory street a good many times of late, he did not turn and go home directly, as he certainly should have done. Instead, he picked his way carefully between the puddles, and arriving at length on the opposite curb, stooped down and flicked off a tiny speck of mud that had somehow got attached to his trouser-leg. If he had really considered that he was then well on the road to perdition, he would undoubtedly have heaved straightway on the reins of morality and pulled himself up with a jerk. But he could not honestly believe that stopping to chat with a pretty little Russian girl who sold flowers for a living was in itself anything wrong. And since what he proposed to do was not in itself really wrong, and since doing it always gave him a great deal of unreasonable pleasure, he continued doggedly in his passage across the street, and did not even deem it necessary to look back once. Thus the specious casuistry of the male; thus his blind ignoring of the main and terrible fact that through his very enjoyment of Trenka's society he was playing with fire; thus, in a word, his blithe and unregenerate entrance into

the little flower shop that beautiful April afternoon. Thus, unhappily, his downfall.

"Oh, Drew," cooed the girl with delicious intimacy, as he stepped inside the open doorway. Then she laid a soft white hand affectionately on the arm of his overcoat. "Oh, Drew. You have come to see me!"

It always made him blush, that greeting, which varied very little from time to time, as though indeed there were nothing more in the world to say. But if it embarrassed him a trifle he liked it. And he liked Trenka's marvelously soft hand on the arm of his overcoat. The simple pressure of her hand, even through the thickness of his heavy melton, thrilled him unspeakably.

"Well, yes, I thought I'd just stop in for a minute or two and see you. How are you feeling to-day?" He wanted to add "girlie," but he always was a bit awkward before this strange will-o'-the-wisp who really had so little in common with him and yet who stirred so deeply every one of his senses. And discreetly he let the sentence stand.

"Oh, fine—perfectly fine." She clapped her hands together and gave a quick, childish gasp of pleasure. Then suddenly she ran to the window and, picking a partially opened rose, brought it to him and put it with elaborate care into his buttonhole. Finally, having patted the lapel of his coat several times with exaggerated solicitude, she sidled up closer to the man and looked longingly into his eyes.

"You haven't been to see me for a long time, Drew," she said. "Bad!" She lifted the palm of her right hand and gave his cheek a little slap.

"Why, yes, I have. I came in to see you only the day before yesterday." So the man. "Don't you remember?"

"Yes," purred Trenka, patting his cheek reminiscently, "I remember."

Then she stopped and added, softly, "But not yesterday."

The reproach was perfect. The girl really was a witch. Suddenly, without the slightest warning in the world, Drew felt that he simply had to take

her in his arms and crush her violently to his bosom. She was standing so close to him that he could have done it easily. And at the bare possibility he lost control of himself so that his knees shook terrifically and he thought that he was going to faint. Then, as suddenly, he paled with horror and remorse. Good heavens! What was he coming to, anyway, even to be thinking of such things? Where were all his old beliefs? Where was his decency? Where was his honour?

He bit one corner of his moustache viciously, and started in clumsy haste for the door.

"Well, it's later than I thought it was," he managed to get out after a minute's pause. "I guess I better be going on." He tried to appear excessively casual. But he felt anything but casual. He had a disconcerting premonition that if he did not get into the air at once, and away from Trenka, he would no longer be responsible for his actions.

But even before he laid his hand on the knob the girl was at his side, pouting a little . . .

"Oh,—without one little kiss?" She looked up beseechingly into his face. She really was delicious.

It was the first time such a thing had even been mentioned. Everything so far had been merely implied, suggested. Now, coming as an open invitation, the temptation was doubly hard to resist. But he meant to be firm. He steeled himself heroically and tried to forget the soft hand pressing maddeningly on the arm of his overcoat.

"Yes," he said. "Yes—without one little kiss."

"Oh!" The pout spread from Trenka's face till it seemed to cover her whole body. It was as though an invisible shadow had crossed the room and touched her in its passage. She drooped with dejection.

"Why? Don't you love me a little bit any more?"

"You know it's not that," Drew said gently. Then, as a wave of sudden inexpressible tenderness swept over him,

he tried to add something more. But he could say nothing. He stood dumb and unspeakably foolish.

"Then, why?—why?"

The insistent pressure on his arm warned him that he would have to be going quickly—if he was to go at all.

"Listen—can't you see?" He stammered out the words in confused haste. "My position—I'm married. We simply can't go on like this any longer. It's impossible, mad, crazy. Oh, don't ask me again—please! Only think of our positions—mine and yours. Think, Trenka! Think what people would say! Oh, think!"

Again he made a move as if to leave. But the girl's arm was pressing heavily on his, detaining him. He wanted desperately to be gone; yet he knew that he wanted more desperately to stay there in the flower shop beside Trenka for the rest of life—for eternity. And the consciousness of entertaining such a monstrous wish lent intensity and bitterness to his words. He was beaten in his elaborately constructed argument, and he knew it. Even before Trenka spoke again he was certain that he would kiss her just as she had asked him. And he had to groan for his own cowardice.

"People!" The girl snatched a petal from the rose she had placed in the man's buttonhole, and *threw* it violently to the floor. "People?" she repeated. "Pouf! I give *that* for the people."

She pounced swiftly on the rose leaf and stamped it angrily under foot. Then she laughed gaily and came running back again.

"Ah, Drew," she said, "you are such a very funny man . . . Come, *cheri*; one little kiss and then you go. Yes? . . .?" She pursed up her lips, closed her eyes half-way, and let her head fall back a little seductively.

"But people talk, Trenka, dear." He felt himself weakening. He was obliged to say something. Honour demanded it. He laid his last objection before the court of convention and considered himself acquitted.

"*Nitchevo?*" said she. "What's the difference?" And as she said it she put a soft, warm, clinging arm about his neck and drew his face slowly to hers . . .

Then, since Drew Smith was a very human being, and instinct really ran stronger in his veins than reason, he suddenly, magnificently, threw his last scruples to the winds and did what every tingling nerve in his body had been telling him to do since the day he had first met Trenka and their hands touched for a moment and lingered. He leaned down and, picking the girl up in his arms, kissed her—kissed her on the neck, on the lips, on the forehead, on the hair, in a perfect riot of disgraceful passion till, trembling from sudden weakness, he had to put her again on the floor. Whereupon, he groped blindly for the door-knob; and hurrying into the street, he fled . . .

All the way home he groaned repeatedly, "Oh, what have I done! My God, what have I done!" For immediately he had got outside into the air again and had come somewhat to his senses he was overpowered with a tremendous sense of remorse; and it seemed to him that he could never look Clarice honestly in the eyes again. Yet, as he neared the house and felt down into the depths of his trousers pocket for his latch-key and walked up the front steps and entered the front door, he began to see things in a calmer, more rational, light.

"After all," he reflected, "I only kissed her. That really isn't so very dreadful when you come to think of it. It's silly to be making such a fuss in my own mind about nothing. Really, I'm acting rather like a baby."

And by the time dinner was served and he had had a good plate of hot chicken soup, he saw things even more rationally than before and was convinced that though perhaps his actions of the afternoon had not been altogether above reproach, his remorse over them was quite disproportionate and unreasonable. And, spearing a large, mealy baked potato, Drew

Smith resolutely put Trenka and the whole upsetting matter from his mind.

For a good many days he managed to keep it there. The next time he approached Mallory street he said to himself, sternly, "No!" and turned stoically on his heel and went another way. When Trenka's soft white hands came to him, as they often did, in visions of alluring, clinging loveliness, he dragged his thoughts defiantly from such dangerous ground and guided them carefully into the harmless pastures of every-day commonplaces. Instead of dreaming the poisonous dreams of love, he got to considering the mundane affairs of the world: whether, for example, he should get a new serge suit or not; whether it was likely for the old lawn-mower to hold out another season; whether Wilson was really a very fine President, as a great many of his friends insisted, or only a colossal jackass, as he himself privately believed; and similar other pressing problems of the day, which problems ordinarily would have interested him greatly, but which no longer interested him at all and left him only strangely cold, indifferent, and apathetic.

Habit, of course, helped him in his battle; and ten years of married life helped him. Most of all an innate, unconquerable sense of fair-play helped him; and it was more to the belief that "playing double" would have been a contemptible, low-down trick than that it would have been an infraction of a high moral law, that Drew owed his scrupulous fidelity to Clarice in the weeks of temptation that followed. In short and vulgarly, it was his sporting rather than his religious blood that kept him straight.

But habit, tradition, moral laws and sporting instincts are alike as helpless nothing before the arrogant demands of the heart. And from spring suits and Presidents and lawn-mowers Drew found his thoughts continually playing truant and reverting, again and again, to Trenka; to Trenka and her wondrous black hair, to Trenka and her

beautiful white hands—always, everlastingly, to Trenka.

Perhaps if circumstances had favored Drew's quite commendable purpose of putting the girl wholly from his life, he would have been spared the ultimate misery of a broken ideal, and would have altogether avoided those cruel thrusts of reproach which soon were to stab his heart in a dozen places—thrusts which were not the less tragic or terrible for being self-inflicted. Unhappily, fate takes but little account of the weakness of a man's nature. When Clarice announced one morning over the breakfast table that she intended going away for a little while "to visit Aunt Julia in the country, you know, Drewy, dear," her husband quite unnecessarily and irrelevantly slopped a teaspoonful of coffee onto the tablecloth. Temptation, suddenly appearing before his eyes like a flaming sword of beauty, left him weak and trembling. For like water which, though unchanged at a very low temperature, is mysteriously, in the twinkling of an eye, converted into ice, men's hidden and even unsuspected desires solidify and take permanent form under the passing breath of circumstance; and from something as volatile and evanescent as air emerge into something as fixed and unalterable as iron. Thus was it that between the spilling of the spoonful of coffee on the tablecloth and the mopping of it up on his napkin a moment later, Drew Smith made the momentous decision of his life. Thus was it that six weeks, six months, six years almost of petty discontents and ignoble dissatisfactions with the life he was living with Clarice concentrated, crystallized themselves startlingly into a dozen seconds of weighty and terrible significance. The critical point in his life was reached. In an instant Drew's soul hardened.

## II

WHEN, some ten days later, the train bearing Clarice to the country vanished down the railroad track under a long bridal-veil of smoke, Drew settled his



hat firmly on his head and turned resolutely for home. But he had not walked a dozen steps in that direction before he retraced himself and started deliberately another way.

It must not be imagined that it was any compunction of conscience which, for a moment, had kept him from definitely approaching Mallory street. Conscience was no longer troubling him. He knew that his love for Trenka was neither dishonourable nor wrong. And he suffered from none of those foolish superstitions of his class by which unfaithfulness becomes more genteel and respectable by being nicely grown over with the moss of passing days. He had ceased to love Clarice; and waiting to bury that love with the rites of convention could do no possible good. Nor did he intend to wait. The only reason that his first step from the station had been in the direction of home rather than in the direction of love was because he had recalled a remark of Clarice's about some letter or other she had left for him on the top of the chiffonier and that she wanted him to be sure to read. The remark had been femininely sandwiched in between a dozen others. Drew could not quite tell why it stood out with such persistent distinctness. But it did stand out—probably because Clarice was wise enough in the ways of men to know that the surest way of drawing attention to a statement is by not drawing any attention to it at all.

And Drew, being a man, had to admit to himself that he was a little curious about the letter. Frankly, he was just a little bit curious. Clarice had acted peculiarly, he thought, as she kissed him good-bye on the station platform and he had helped her up the high awkward steps of the day coach. He had thought so at the time; and swinging briskly down the road toward Mallory street, with his feet turned out at a wide, comfortable angle, as was his custom when walking rapidly, he thought so and with renewed emphasis again. The mere fact that since their marriage some twelve years earlier they

had not been separated for one whole day did not adequately or satisfactorily account for his wife's change of manner. No! It could not be unhappiness at leaving him that was at fault. Clarice had not appeared particularly unhappy about going away; he had to admit in all honesty that she had not seemed particularly unhappy. But—well, she had acted peculiarly. It really was the only word covering the situation: she had acted peculiarly, and that was all there was to it.

Then, the cool afternoon air filling his lungs in great, cleansing draughts, Drew soon forgot about the letter which was waiting for him at home on top of the chiffonier; he forgot about Clarice and her recent and rather odd departure from home "to visit Aunt Julia in the country, you know, Drewy, dear"; he forgot about everything that was unpleasant and puzzling and strange. His step quickened. His blood commenced pounding healthily through his veins. He was happy. Nature sang to him from the tree-tops and drowned out the noise of the past in the music of the future. Even the fact that he had not shaved or put on a clean collar as he had originally intended doing (which was an additional reason back of his plan for going straight home before seeing Trenka)—even that distressing fact was dissolved into its state of proper insignificance under the brightness of the spring day. And as he went striding down the street and caught a distant glimpse of Trenka smiling at him through the open door of the florist shop, all that he remembered, indeed, was that a pair of soft white hands were there, waiting to pat his cheek lovingly, and thrill his senses with their wonderful and magical softness.

Picking his way carefully across the road, he stopped on the opposite curb to flick off with the corner of his pocket-handkerchief a speck of mud that had somehow got attached to his trousers-leg. Then, while he straightened his back and started for the shop, Trenka stepped out the door and called to him.

"Oh, Drew," said she, "how fast you've been walking! Why, you're all out of your breath, aren't you?"

"Of course. Why shouldn't I hurry? I've been coming to see you!"

A dozen steps brought him abreast of the doorway. He took the girl's hand and squeezed it tight in his, looking hungrily into her eyes. Then, as by a common instinct, both stepped inside.

"Kiss me, Trenka," Drew ordered with sudden, passionate intensity, as soon as they were safely in the shop. "Kiss me, Trenka!"

He flung his arm around her waist and drew his hand gradually toward him, pressing the girl's body close to his—so close, indeed, that he could feel the little birdlike flutter of heart beating against his right side. Her breath came warm in his face; her head fell back a little, seductively; her whole body yielded and relaxed; then her lips parted slightly, and met his . . .

But it was only for a moment. A florist's shop on a public highway is no proper place for the private ecstasies of love. And Trenka drew away, though she still allowed her hand to rest on the man's shoulder.

"She has gone, you say?" she inquired gently after a moment, as she smiled up in Drew's eyes.

"Yes."

"For how long?"

"I don't know—a week, perhaps two."

"That is not very long—is it, *cheri*?"

"No."

Drew felt his cheek being gently stroked now with the deliciously soft palm of the girl's hand. He remembered, suddenly, the first day he had yielded to that contact, and what a fool he had made of himself getting away. Well, he had no desire to play that sort of a fool again. He took the hand that was stroking his cheek, and held it firmly in his own. Then he cleared his fogging senses by a deliberate effort at concentration; and pushing Trenka gently back from him held her there at arm's length.

"Listen," he said. "I've got to go now. Somebody'll be coming in here any minute." He paused and looked out the window uneasily as a passerby halted an instant to examine a flowering magnolia set on exhibition. It seemed to him, now that his plan was rapidly approaching consummation, that the entire world was aware of his proposed intrigue with Trenka, and was deliberately spying on him for evidence.

"But before I go," he continued, when to his infinite relief the prospective customer outside went on his way without even entering to inquire the price of the magnolia, "before I go, I want to ask you if you would care to—that is, do you think—er—would you mind coming up to see me, perhaps, for a little while some evening soon? It's going to be very lonesome, you know. I'm all alone." Drew stopped and blushed, and wondered nervously if his invitation sounded as coarse in Trenka's ears as it had in his. From sheer embarrassment, and because he didn't know what else in the world to do with himself, he walked to the door and laid his hand on the knob, which rattled sympathetically under his unsteady touch.

Trenka pulled a leaf off a near-by plant before replying and started slowly tearing the green thing into tiny shreds.

"Well, *perhaps*," she mused coyly, at length, "*perhaps*."

She plucked several times again at a small fragment and seemed gravely intent on reducing it to a state of absolute ruin. Then, suddenly, she threw her manner aside like a discarded cloak. With a frank, childish little laugh she dropped the remaining pieces of the leaf to the floor and putting out her hands walked straight towards Drew, while she smiled boldly into his eyes.

"When?" said she, and rested her hand on the arm of his coat. "When, Drew, do you want me to come up to the house?"

The man with his hand on the door-knob moved in greater embarrassment than before.

"Why—why, any time you say," he muttered. "This evening?"

"All right."

The door-knob rattled again and Drew stared uncomfortably into the street. Frankly, he had not expected such directness from Trenka. All his life he had been taught to listen for silly coquetries and evasions on the lips of women. And this new phase of femininity puzzled him. Yet, also, he could not help but like the girl's healthy, refreshing honesty. He was touched by it unaccountably, unexpectedly. It made him realize as perhaps nothing else could how original and remarkable a person Trenka really was.

She was standing very close to him now. Drew dropped the knob he had been turning aimlessly back and forth and seized both her hands roughly in his.

"Trenka," he said with sudden, intense emotion, "Trenka, you're a wonder!" He tried to kiss her again, and to do it commenced pulling her toward him. A fine rapture, an ecstatic abandon born out of the nearness and warmth and loveliness of the girl rendered him deaf to the judgments of the world. He cared nothing now for what people might say, do, think. He cared nothing that he was standing by the very door of the florist shop in full view of all Mallory street. His head was on fire; his knees were trembling violently; his hands and feet suddenly had grown cold. There was no resisting. He did not want to resist. He did not intend to. But before he could draw her to him Trenka had escaped his hold and stepped back into the centre of the room.

"No," she said, still edging away as Drew persistently followed her. "No, Drew—not now!" The steel of command made itself felt even through the velvet of entreaty. And Drew acknowledged the force of her remark by saying, simply:

"You're right, Trenka: I'm a fool."

Then he stepped to the door. A prospective customer whom he had not noticed was standing outside the win-

dow, peering through. The girl certainly had her head on her shoulders.

"But don't forget," he called back, as he brushed shoulders with a middle-aged, inquisitive-looking female who carried a scraggly pomeranian under her arm. "Don't forget, Trenka."

For answer he received a playfully blown kiss and a smile of understanding. The inquisitive looking female stared at him hard as he strode swiftly by her into the street. But Drew only laughed a boyish laugh of contempt at the woman's expression of outraged propriety which followed him out the door. He filled his lungs with great puffs of the wonderful spring air. Spring was in his heart. And Trenka was in his heart, too. He walked up the street with a long, swinging stride. He was gloriously happy.

### III

At the front door Drew stopped long enough to get out his keys. Then he strode into the empty house and hurried upstairs.

There really was no need for haste. He had nothing whatever of importance to do until Trenka came. And she could not be expected to arrive for at least a couple of hours. But he was warm with the excitement of his adventure. He had to vent his emotion in action.

Stepping into the bathroom, Drew washed his hands and face, drying them rapidly on a towel. Then he walked into his bedroom—and Clarice's—and took off his collar and changed it for a fresh one; put on, after some deliberation, a handsome satin cravat which heretofore he had made a custom of wearing only on Sundays; looked down at his shoes; decided they were very muddy; went back to the bathroom and cleaned them; washed his hands again, which act was necessitated by his adventure with the blacking brush; retraced his steps to the bedroom; adjusted his tie; readjusted his tie; moved a little closer to the mirror to readjust his tie some more; noticed suddenly that

he needed a shave; took off his collar and tie and went to the bathroom for a third time; shaved; came back and put them on again; put on his coat; brushed it; brushed it again; stopped brushing it entirely; wondered what he would do next; and was standing irresolute in the middle of the room while he considered whether it might not be a good idea to brush his teeth, too, when a white object lying on the top of the chiffonier caught his eye. He laid down his clothes-brush and picked up the thing, curiously. It was a folded sheet of note paper, and on the outside was written in a flourishing, billboard style

#### TO DREW FROM CLARICE

Obviously, the flaunting character of the address was designed to attract his attention. It was strange that till then it had not attracted his attention. It was doubly strange, since he had been particularly told that there was a letter waiting for him on the top of the chiffonier, and he had been particularly asked to read it. An hour before, as the train pulled out from the station, he had been immensely curious about that letter. And now he had all but passed it by! Strange! Well, more important and interesting matters had intervened. That was all. A man had other things to think of besides letters from his wife. Probably, anyhow, it was nothing but a reminder to put on heavier underwear in case the weather should get colder. Or not to get his feet wet without immediately changing his socks! Oh, he knew the formula! For twelve years it had been dinned in his ears. There could be no forgetting it. He smiled a little amused smile as he folded back the sheet and smoothed out the crease in the middle of the paper. Then, as the light was getting poor, he walked to the window and started casually to read it.

Drew Smith was not an unimaginative man, though his imagination seldom soared into the tree-tops. Nor was he a weak man, physically, nor one

inclined to let a shock upset his digestion. He had never fainted in his life. He did not faint now. At first he was absolutely unable to grasp the meaning of the note written in Clarice's clear, unhurried hand. And he read it over carefully no less than three times before he gathered its true import. But then, when he had done that, he suddenly and irrelevantly decided that he would like to sit down. It was an odd decision to make, perhaps; but his legs felt peculiarly weak and detached from his body; and his knee-joints seemed to be composed of double hinges that worked unexpectedly in all directions and with surprising ease. So he sat down on the edge of the bed. The room had rapidly taken on an air of quite disconcerting emptiness. It was as though all the air had been sucked out. To convince himself that the whole thing was all absolutely untrue, he read the letter over for a fourth time. But it did no good. There could no longer be any doubt about it. Clarice had left him.

*Drewy dear. I don't love you any more, so I am going away and I'm never coming back again. I didn't tell you before because I thought this way would be nicer for us both. Please forgive me and know that I have quite made up my mind. That is all. Good-bye.*

CLARICE.

For perhaps ten minutes Drew sat on the edge of his bed—and Clarice's—and stared at the letter before him. Then in the quietness of the room there was suddenly a soft *plop-plop* on the carpet, and a dozen little round wet spots brightened the red-and-green pattern under Drew's feet. A minute later he was sobbing and blubbering like a baby.

How long after that he sat there with his head between his hands he could not have told. It seemed a long time—hours, perhaps years. The light gradually faded, the pattern on the carpet dissolved into a toneless grey, the chif-



fionier slid back and became a phantom in the dusk—the whole world, it seemed, was being swallowed up under the advancing, remorseless tide of the beautiful spring twilight. And stunned, bruised, shaken like a leaf in a cruel gust of autumn wind, Drew sat there on the edge of the bed, trying as best he could to hold down the uncontrollable sobs that racked him as his cough racks and tears the consumptive.

But naturally he could not sit there forever; and as the excess of his bitterness was spilled onto the floor, the man's spirits lightened a little and he was able to look around the room again with some measure of his former poise. He looked at the clock and saw that it was after seven; he felt of his collar and found it irremediably wilted; he planted his feet firmly on the floor as a course of action began to take more or less definite shape in his mind; then he stood up quickly and went to a little writing table in the corner of the room and opened a side drawer. In it was a time-table. He took it out and after lighting the gas examined the regular rows of figures with minute care. Yes. There was a train at 7.37 just as he had thought. Perhaps Clarice had not gone to Rutledge, and his chase would be a wild-goose affair. But if she had not gone to Rutledge, then she had gone somewhere else, that was all. And as long as he was alive he would pursue her, track her down, find her. God! To think that she could have left him so heartlessly, without even a single word of regret for what she was doing. But no! He wouldn't believe she didn't love him! Never would he believe such a monstrous lie! There had been some terrible mistake, a misunderstanding which doubtless could be explained away by a quiet, confidential talk. Perhaps he had been unsympathetic occasionally; perhaps he had seemed indifferent to those thousand daily solicitations after his health that he had once considered nothing but Clarice's foolishness, but which he now saw were only demonstrations of her eternal goodness and unselfishness of spirit.

But surely such things could be forgiven. Surely, ah, surely, it was not too late!

Drew picked up his wife's letter and crushed it passionately to his lips. Then he laid it down on the top of the chiffonier and taking off his wilted collar and the black satin tie went to the bathroom and bathed his eyes under a flood of cool, refreshing water. The action of the water perhaps as much as anything else quieted his nerves and almost as suddenly as he had previously become a mere weakling that was bowed before the emotional storm caused by Clarice's letter, he now felt himself growing stronger—stronger as the oak grows stronger which comprehends its hidden power only after being battered and tested by a hurricane.

With a feeling almost akin to exultation Drew strode back to his bedroom—and Clarice's—and flung a few clothes into an empty suit-case. Clarice needed him and he needed Clarice. That was the unshakable ground in which his spirit was rooted. Though the winds of mischance blew ever so shrilly around his head and screeched into his ears their tales of jealousy and suspicion, his feet were planted on a rock and could not be moved.

As the lock on the bag suddenly snapped shut Drew realized that a new life was opening before him—that just as he had closed the lid on his valise so had he closed the lid on all the pettiness and indifference of his former life with Clarice, and that this momentary break with her was but the snapping of a bond which should henceforth leave both free to love with a truer, finer, firmer, freer love than had ever been possible before.

So at least he thought, as he hurriedly glanced at the clock and noted with some alarm that he had exactly seven minutes to get to the station. It was the end but it also was a greater beginning. He picked up his suit-case with enthusiasm and turned off the light in the bedroom. Then he walked slowly to the head of the stairs and felt cautiously for the top step with his toe. As

he did so he was startled to hear the front doorbell suddenly begin to ring.

## IV

TEN minutes later, or three minutes after the train had pulled out from the station, Drew was back in his sitting-room—and Clarice's. Trenka sat on the edge of the chaise-longue and kicked at the carpet with the slender toe of her slipper.

He was still trying to explain to her that his wife had left him and that it was his duty to follow her and bring her back. But the explanation apparently was not couched in terms suited to the girl's intelligence: all his elaborate arguments to get rid of her were going clean over her head.

"But can't you see—?" Drew ended desperately for the tenth time. "Can't you see?"

Trenka could not see. She only looked down at the little bright spots on the carpet under her feet, which now were not quite so bright, and smiled.

"Well, but—" Drew suddenly dropped his hands dumbly at his side and stopped chewing the corner of his mustache. It was a signal that he con-

sidered the argument closed. And it was closed; only in a different sense from what he imagined it. For Trenka stood up at that moment and came over to him and laid her soft white hand against his cheek.

"And don't you even want to kiss me, *cheri*?" she said.

"Oh, I can't, Trenka. You don't seem to understand." He tried to draw away from her as he had so often done in the florist shop before. But he was powerless to do anything now. He could only stand helpless by the chiffonier and fumble, dazed, with a corner of a scarf.

"But, why?" insisted the girl. "Why?" But this time she did not wait for an answer. She put her arm on his shoulder and drew his face slowly down until it met hers . . .

He started to resist. But it was quite useless. Some old half-remembered sense of honour struggled within him for a second. But it was only for a second.

"*Nitchevo*?" he heard whispered in his ear. He remarked at the time that the girl's breath tickled his ear deliciously. "What's the difference?"

Then he forgot everything except that he felt himself being kissed . . .



## A DIALOGUE IN A HAT SHOP

TWO women, meeting in a hat shop, squared off and began to spar.

"My husband," said the one, "loves me so much that he pays all my bills without a murmur."

"And mine," said the other, "loves me so much that he wakes me every morning by kissing me on the lips."

"My husband," said the first, "would still love me if I bought ten thousand hats a year."

"And mine," said the other, "would still love me if I wore one hat all the year 'round."



## DANTE SPEAKS

By John McClure

I HAVE put her into a book, a book that shall stand, like the cathedral Santa Maria dei Fiori, for a thousand years. A book that is alone in the world. But it has little eased my heart. Though I had written the tale on tablets of marble with a pen of hot flame, it had not eased my heart. She has been dead for thirty years. For thirty years she has haunted my dreams. I cannot forget her

To me the world is a desolate city. I can find no peace in it. My friends of old days and the city of my youth have turned against me, all. She has haunted my dreams for thirty years. She peers out of the grey rain, she steals upon me out of the twilight—"I am Beatrice."

I cannot smile. Even the children in the gutter whisper "See! The man who has been to hell!" They fear me. Aye. The man who has been to hell. *Has* been? Now is. The streets of this town are the streets of limbo. I can find no peace here.

She has been dead for thirty years. And I have put her into a book that shall stand for a thousand years, rivetted with stars. But it has little eased

my heart. My dreams are terrible and wistful, haunted by her face. I can find no peace here. . . .

Ay, I have been married. My wife is in Florence. We have had four children. But that means nothing, nothing in the world. I could ha' had children by a wench of Borneo. . . .

I cannot forget her. I cannot smile. And the town of my youth has turned upon me with sharp fangs. An I went back, they would burn me alive. Goodness and mercy have vanished out of the world. I shall not go back. I wander the streets of a desolate city, my bread is bitter. Ay. The man who has been to hell. But there is nothing lasts forever. There comes the fall of night. There is nothing lasts forever, not hell.

Then I shall see her, when I am dead. —My wife? She is in Florence.

The world is mad. It passeth away and the lust of it.

Perhaps one day men shall read in my book that is rivetted with stars so as to stand forever, and lay it aside, pitying me, and say, "Lo, here is one who loved and lost by the will of the 'Almighty God.'"



## LA DÉVOTE

By W. L. D. Bell

SHE is pious, quotha? A frequenter of the altar? Forever on her knees? . . . With those eyes! With that hair! . . . Oh, la, la, la! Piety to such a woman is no more than a delicate and surreptitious flirtation with God! . . .

# ATAVISM

A TALE OF PASSIONS IN THE ROUGH

By John Florance

EDITH sat before the square glass of her dressing table and considered herself. The bow would do; it was a trifle old, for she had worn it a day, but on the other hand, it was of a subtle brown that brought out the gold in her eyes. She swung her feet up and down. They were dressed in white socks with three blue borders. She frowned at the socks, but felt that they were advisable because her skirts were so short, although her mother had promised to consider the matter. As for her legs, they were plump and pleasing. She sighed and directed an enormous powder puff at her small nose so that it became white and scared-looking. Then she jumped down from the chair, gave her sash a little perk, and skipped downstairs.

In a corner of the hotel veranda was Alfred in a stiff white collar that spread out over his coat toward his shoulders. He was discussing something of some importance with two other males, although it was obvious that they were merely listening to Alfred, whose face was kindly, as one who imparts information. They were incredulous, however.

"The Simplex," said Alfred firmly, "can go a hundred miles an hour if it wants to."

"Jiminy!" said the least of his familiars.

"It could do more than that," said Alfred on more mature thought. "Betcha it could do a hundred and twenty."

Words were not adequate to express the surprise and wonderment among

the other two. Which is as well, for at that moment Edith skipped out of a doorway.

She saw Alfred before he saw her, and changed her skip at once, so that when he spied her over the heads of the two men, she was standing very thoughtfully before the steps, considering whether to go down them or to stay above in a rocking chair. Alfred saw her move her head the least bit toward him. Their eyes met, and she bowed slightly.

"You gotta excuse me," he said, and left his fellows. They nudged one another slyly and watched him walk toward Edith where she stood still undecided.

"Oh, you Alfred!" they cried, and fled, but he was unembarrassed, continuing to regard Edith somewhat shyly, but withal with a direct and challenging gaze.

"Hello," he said.

"Hello," she answered.

They considered each other in silence. Finally he spoke.

"Goin' downstairs?"

She pouted. "Well," she said, "I might. But I don't know. It's very hot."

This was undeniably true, and left nothing for him to say. If she had been a man, he might have explained about a Simplex, and that would have been a conversation. On the other hand, she'd not be interested.

"I got 'n auto," he said suddenly.

"Have you really?" she cried. "Isn't that splendid! May I see it?"

They walked down the steps together.



er and approached his machine. It was a racing type, painted shiny blue. It was operated from under the feet. Edith expressed her delight.

"Go for a ride?" ventured the owner.

She would; they clambered in and rode off at great speed, making a wide flourishing turn. Finally Alfred grew tired and breathless and they stopped.

"It's perfectly lovely," said Edith. "Thank you ever so much. I've had a dear time."

"Betcha it would go fifty miles an hour," said Alfred.

"Yes, indeed," she agreed, and they became enthusiastic on the subject of the blue racer's speed. He explained to her about Simplexes.

That night at supper Edith wore blue silk stockings and a blue sash encircling the most ravishing of frocks. Alfred came to supper with his hair very wet and smooth and after supper was over he came to where Edith was sitting with her mother, and asked her if he might—if he might—well, would she dance with him? She would, albeit he was quite red in the face and inexpressive, a state that she disliked very much in men. They walked silently to the ballroom that was already full of sliding couples, and began to dance, very gravely, but she smiled up into his face as she had always seen the great ones smile into their partner's faces. He, however, looked steadily ahead of him.

"Do you know," she said at last, "you dance very well."

"Think so?" He grew slightly pink and pleased.

"Very. But some of your steps are a little—well, old, perhaps. It may be the fault of the music. It's awfully bad. Rotten, for a big hotel like this!"

He was impressed by her knowledge; the dancing finished, they went out together and walked up and down the veranda. A big summer moon was shining and there were white moon shadows on the trees and the lawns. A sweet wind blew, heavy with the scents

of flowers at night. He took her arm a bit nervously.

"Say," he said at last, and then stopped.

"Yes?" she asked finally, when it was evident that he was going to say no more.

"Well—you're awfully pretty!"

She smiled at the darkness. He gulped, but she said nothing, and from the darkness her mother came to her and took her off to bed.

The next morning she missed him at breakfast, but at another table there sat a new girl, a slender creature with light golden hair and big blue eyes. She, too, wore socks; hers, however, were brown, and on her feet were sandals, a very inelegant foot wear. Also, her frock was not lovely.

Edith looked at her curiously, nevertheless. There were no girls at the hotel save herself, and now this newcomer. She might be pleasant company, and at any rate, a woman in a love affair ought to have some confidants of her own sex, someone upon whose bosom she might lean, and even weep a bit perhaps. The new girl returned Edith's stare with interest.

"A little *gauche*," thought Edith, and ate her breakfast.

Later she sat on the veranda with her mother, and with Alfred's mother. Talk was desultory, dealing with Edith's clothes somewhat, Alfred's clothes, the difficult way that children grow at the age of eight and nine. It rather bored Edith, and she tried several times to bring the talk into society happenings and a more interesting gossip of affairs. She was unsuccessful, however, and had risen to go when from around the corner there came walking the new little girl and her mother. Edith's mother rose to meet them.

"Edith," she said, "this is Mary."

The two regarded each other gravely.

"How do you do," said Edith, politely, but Mary did not answer, clutching more tightly something she carried in her arms.

"My God!" said Edith to herself, noticing her bundle. "It's a doll!"

A doll it was, not overly elaborate nor very well dressed. Edith looked at it in dismay. Courtesy compelled.

"Isn't it cute," she remarked.

Mary looked at the doll solemnly.

"Her name," she said, "is Jane. Would you like to hold her?"

Edith gasped. "Oh, no!" she said quickly, and then with an appealing smile, "You see—I'm not used to—to—babies, and I might drop it. Her."

From the lawn below came thundering the voices of men, Alfred and his crew returning from an excursion. He saw Edith and waved to her.

"Yoo—oo," he cried. "Guess what. We had time trials and I beat my old record to smash. Whad I tell you?"

He raced up the stairs and halted suddenly before the stranger, abashed. It gave Edith some pleasure to witness his discomfiture until she introduced him.

Mary regarded him as solemnly as she had Edith before him. Then suddenly she put out her hand, and they shook hands.

"Would you like to see my auto?" he asked her, and she shook her head up and down, vigorously. He led the way downstairs with some conscious pride, Edith and Mary following behind him, the latter holding tightly to the creature, Jane. Edith put her arms across Mary's slender shoulders.

"We must be great friends," she said. It was good to walk with Mary so, a bit sweeter looking perhaps, a little girlish—an unpleasant adjective, she thought, but one that had its uses before men.

"Oh!" cried Mary as they came in sight of the little blue racer. "Oh!"

Alfred smiled, and ran his hand along the hood. "Pretty good," he admitted, "pretty speedy little boat." He climbed into the driver's seat and waved his arm.

"Come on," said he to Mary, who clambered beside him at once. Some fussing with levers that connected with

nothing at all, and they were off. Edith stood where they had left her, holding the doll that Mary had given her. She dropped it on the grass and ran across the lawn and up the stairs, where she sat furiously rocking in a chair.

After supper that night she loitered near the dining-room door, rather shamelessly, perhaps; when Alfred came out, however, she was walking away, but she turned her head to smile at him. He hurried after her, whereat she laid a light cool hand in his arm and leaned on it the least bit.

"Shall we dance?" she asked, and they went together into the ballroom. Between dances they considered Mary. Edith was of the opinion that she was a quaint little soul, but likable. To this Alfred agreed somewhat, although he brought up the point that her education left something to be desired, since she had quite failed to grasp the significance of the phenomenal speed attained by the Simplex. Edith assented, and admitted that to her she had seemed a bit awkward and lacking in style. This was the subject for some slight debate when Mary herself came into the ballroom, looking very fresh and wide-eyed in blue and white. So Alfred excused himself from Edith to dance with Mary, which after all was only polite, and afterward the three walked together under the moonlight. From the shadows of the trees came the faint shouts of the younger boys playing tag, a game richly deserving the scornful laugh that Alfred gave them in passing.

It was a night eminently suited to the discussion of love, a night that would have doubtless been given to some such discussion had there been but two instead of three walking up and down on the verandah. This Edith felt surely, and the wasted moonlight seemed unfortunate. She longed to hear again the naïve words of the other night that had described her beauty. Mary, however, was solicitous of Jane, afraid that the night air might give the doll a cold. Edith announced

quite audibly that it was nonsense. "Mary," said Edith at last, "didn't I hear your mother calling you?"

They stood still and listened. From a doorway a voice spoke.

"Come, Edith."

Mary watched her go with tranquil eyes.

Morning broke over the ridges of the hills, and on that day there was to be a picnic, a walk up a small mountain and back again, stopping for lunch at the top. Edith met Alfred early, and stood out in the fresh morning sun with him, watching a sprinkler whirl about in a bed of flowers and scatter myriad drops of water over the grass.

"She's rather silly about her doll, isn't she?" said Edith. "I'm afraid that she'll simply insist on bringing it with her to-day, and that would spoil everything, wouldn't it?"

"Well——" said Alfred, and no more. Edith pouted, and wiggled her toe in the grass.

"I hope she stands the trip. She looks delicate, doesn't she?"

"Well——" said Alfred, even more impressively, but that was all.

After breakfast the two girls met, Edith with a novel, and Mary with Jane.

"My dear," cried Edith, "how is the baby?"

"Very well," said Mary. "But she had a bad night."

Edith compressed her lips and looked patiently to heaven. They sat together and Edith read her novel, while Mary industriously sewed an unmentionable portion of Jane's immediate attire. The gaudy covers of the novel drooped and shut at last, and Edith watched Mary.

"You dance very nicely, dear," she said at last, "but that waltz you do is quite old fashioned. They don't do it any more. Would you like me to teach you some of the new steps?"

"No," said Mary. She spoke pleasantly, but with finality, as one who speaks from a philosophy rather than from personal feelings. Then she gave

her entire attention to the re-clothing of Jane, and conversation languished.

Edith bit her lip. "I hope you're not going to take that—the doll along with you to-day."

Mary made no answer, and Edith went on.

"It's a very hard climb. Do you think you'd be able to do it? You see, I'm in practise." She brought her fist up tightly.

"Perhaps you wouldn't like it at all," she ventured finally.

Mary looked at her from her wide blue eyes, and Edith's deep brown ones turned away.

"I'm afraid Jane would be lonely if I left her," said Mary. Edith got up and went indoors and so up to her room. She threw the book on the floor and stamped her foot.

As she had guessed, it occurred. The helpless Jane made climbing difficult for Mary, and so it was Alfred's duty to help her, which he did, very gallantly. He gave her his hand, and pulled her over rocks and up boulders. Edith clambered coldly behind them, nor would she take any interest in the little bunch of violets he picked for her, and to his bewildered question she answered nothing of comfort.

"Gosh, Edith," he said, "what's the matter?"

"Nothing," she said.

And then Alfred fell miserably on a rock and cut his shin. The older members of the party were far below them, carrying the lunch, and walking slowly. Alfred looked down at his leg and through the gaping hole in his stocking saw a thin trickle of blood. His face grew white and his lips trembled. He felt very lonely and small.

Edith had screamed when he fell, and now stood wanly before him, gazing as if fascinated at the growing puddle of blood. She wrung her hands faintly.

But Mary sat Jane down deliberately with her back to a rock, and smiled at Alfred.

"Does it hurt?" she asked. He nodded, clenching his teeth.

She took a little handkerchief out of her pocket and dipped it into a providential runnel of water near by. She motioned to Alfred, and he took his stocking down. Then very coolly she washed the cut, and when the handkerchief was no longer available, she used Jane's unmentionables.

Afterward they all talked a great deal, very excitedly, explaining their feelings.

"The sight of blood just makes me faint," said Edith. "It's my nerves. Though I'm awfully strong." She doubled up her fist again.

And later, when the mothers came up to them she went over it all in detail.

"It was perfectly terrible," she told them. But she made little mention of Mary.

Days followed each other across the summer sky, days of warm sun and pleasant cozy rain, days of dust and wind; and Mary was often in the little blue racer observing the mysteries of locomotion, and often Edith came upon the car with Jane sitting boldly in the empty seats, mute testimony to the master's and mistress' companionship. And often Alfred danced the old-fashioned waltz with Mary after dinner, and Edith's eyes grew stormy.

But it is not true that he had forsaken her, for as often as he drove Mary, he danced with Edith, and as often as he danced with Mary he walked with Edith in the moonlight. But what she wanted to hear him say, he did not say, although it is true that he held her hand one evening very shyly, but she more than suspected that he had held Mary's hand, too, and she even feared that he had kissed her. Therein, however, she was wrong, for there was a certain matronly air about Mary, due to the constant presence of Jane, that would have awed him a bit had he ever contemplated so dastardly a thing.

But if Mary felt that Edith was an intrusion into her Eden, she did not show it, except, perhaps, that when she spoke to Edith, or of Edith, her

eyes grew wider and bluer, and flickered the least bit once or twice.

Until at last one afternoon Edith and Alfred were sitting together on a mossy log in the woods; it was very nearly the end of their summer together, and Edith could keep still no longer.

"What," she asked, "do you think of Mary?"

"I like her," he said simply. "I think she's great."

Edith frowned, and evil crept into her heart and from her heart to her tongue.

"She's a dear little thing," she said, "but if I were you, I'd be careful."

The natural answer was "Why?"

"It's too bad—but her family isn't very nice. Her father wasn't—wasn't nice. He—he was bad."

"Gee," said Alfred.

"You never can tell about people," she went on. "We had a cook once whose father was bad, and the cook got bad, too. Mary might inherit it, you see. I think he stole."

"Who told you?" asked Alfred hoarsely.

There was a short silence.

"I heard it," she said at last, defiantly.

And then from behind them came the avenging angel, Mary. She spoke to Alfred coldly.

"You go home," she said. "I want to tell Edith a secret."

Edith grew pale and rose to her feet. Alfred protested mutely but in vain, for Mary's eyes flashed as she looked at him.

"Aw gee," said Alfred, but he went, slowly and with a heavy heart. Edith stood looking at Mary, and her lip curled scornfully.

"I heard what you said," cried Mary at last, "I heard it all, every bit of it. And you're a bad, wicked girl to tell such lies, a terribly bad girl, and God hates you!"

Edith laughed, and Mary stamped her foot.

"Go on," said Edith, "go on. You amuse me."



"You sneak!" cried Mary, and Edith slapped her across the mouth.

From behind the slap emerged a flame-wrought fury of seven summers, in whose glittering blue eyes flared the passions of Gehenna. She struck at Edith, and Edith struck back passionately, and clutched at her. They became a fury of arms and flying hair and legs, Edith fighting madly but blindly, Mary fighting with a cold Puritanical lust so that at last she knocked Edith down. Crying, Edith rose to her feet, and Mary, a raging fiend, knocked her down again, and yet again. Edith lay weeping uncontrollably and above her stood the victrix, battle light gleam-

ing in her eyes, small fists clenched, breathing deeply and unevenly.

And mercifully hidden from the battle ground, on the verandah of the hotel sat the mothers of the conquered and the conquering, and with them his mother. It was his mother who was speaking.

"He's a funny chap," she was saying. "Only last night he told me that he liked Mary better than he did Edith. He said that he found her so old-fashioned and motherly and tender, and so unlike Edith who is so clever and wise."

"They're a queer lot, the children," said Mary's mother.

And Edith's mother sighed.



## FROM THE JOURNAL OF MADAME LEANDRE

By Helen Woljeska

1. Laughter is something by which we show how foolish we are, or hide how wise we are.

2. The secret of success: burn your bridges behind you.

3. To win back your husband's love according to the time-honoured *recipé*, you must win another man's love . . . the danger is that you may prefer the punishment to the crime.

4. Woman insists on being blind. For to see her lover as he is would blacken her own face.

5. A woman must have lost herself before she can find herself.

6. Tell me your sorrows, and I will tell you how you look.

7. A woman either is unhappy, or makes unhappy.

8. There is only one thing a woman loves more deeply than her lover—that is the grief he is causing her.

9. If you wish to do anything worth doing, you must be willing to do it in spite of everything and everybody. All true success is a desperate *Quand Même*.

10. As long as one feels one is free to go whenever one chooses, one willingly bears conditions that otherwise would seem unbearable. . . . *Mon ami*—don't you know that we are always free to go?

11. The little boat of my life too swiftly glides past the sunny, peaceful places, the glittering currents of a thousand joyful, rippling silver-waves, the fairy bays adream with wondrous water-lilies. But in the dark lagoons, by dismal shores, where secret whirlpools threaten, and the air is heavy with a brooding melancholy languor—there it will linger, interminably. Little Boat. Have your way! With me I carry the book of memories and the pillow of dreams. And on my mast flutters the Hope of Oblivion.

## OH—MAXINE!

By C. S. Montanye

THERE was one consuming, soul-rending ambition in the life of Lucien Jamarat. This was to meet the beautiful and fascinating Maxine Dambrine. For him the peerless dancer was as a star—coldly beautiful and winking, twinkling from a great distance. From the night he had first seen her at the Théâtre Malesherbes, her image had never left his mind—face and form limned themselves on his inner vision and he knew nothing could erase them, not even the grim hand of Time.

Lucien was assistant to the chef at the Café of the First Shell. His duties there were such that little time was afforded him to think of anything save the business of the moment. It was only in the evenings, after his work was completed, that his thoughts turned again to the beautiful enchantress, with the hair of a Cleopatra and the form of Venus.

He made it a point to witness her performance every other night from a stage-box, and even the odd nights would find him before the theater and her framed photograph outside. Here he would pause and for hours feast adoring eyes on her likeness. Again he would conjure up a vision of her loveliness, and when there came a rattle of applause from within he would murmur sadly two words:

"Oh—Maxine!"

Only the presence of a gendarme, conversing amiably with the girl behind the box-office window, prevented him from picking up the frame and photograph and making off with it. Once or twice his itching fingers had actually crept cautiously out and touched it, but

on both of these occasions his nerve had failed him at the crucial moment and he had glanced up to find the cold and inquiring eye of the gendarme on him. So he had sighed dismally again and wandered off to the stage entrance, when he took up a lonely vigil that was never rewarded. At the closing hour, the other performers would hurry out, but for him there was never a sign of the Dambrine.

At length matters reached a crisis. The thought of her, the desire and longing to know her, to speak with her, to touch her hand and see if she was real, began to interfere with his duties at the Café.

While preparing a Bavarian Glacé for an attaché from the Embassy, in the kitchen, he thought of her hair and carelessly mixed with the meringue a portion of that day's *Temps*. The attaché had left strangling and enraged. Later, while picturing the delightful curve of her lips, he had mistaken the cayenne for the salt and garnished his Beef Milan to such an extent that half of the diners developed a curious and unexplainable desire for the contents of the water-bottles. But the power that protects idiots and those who partake too freely of the flowing-bowl looked to his destiny and these grievous errors were not laid at his feet. Instead, an astonished kitchen-man received his wages and was discharged.

A week after his narrow escape and at the hour of his release, the young man sought a nearby café and solace in the contents of sundry tall, thin glasses. He had finished a number of these, an even half-dozen, to be exact, when a man approached, glanced first at the

empty chair beside the table, then at Lucien, and seated himself.

It was not until the stranger spoke that Lucien took note of his presence.

"Monsieur must be in trouble," the man said sympathetically, "or in—love."

Lucien looked up, frowned and remained silent. Conversation, he felt, was at the moment an insult to his feelings.

The other, in no way abashed, hunched his chair closer to the table. Lucien saw he was a thin, undersized Frenchman of middle age, a bit shabby at elbow and knee, but of a cheerful countenance and an unfailing smile. From his careless dress, flowing tie and untidy hair, he suspected the student or artist, up from the Quartier.

"Allow me to introduce myself," the man continued pleasantly. "I am François Bofourdin, m'sieu, and I take it upon myself to offer assistance to those in trouble." He waved a graceful hand at the pile of saucers in front of Lucien. "You may speak freely."

Lucien, a trifle astonished, mopped his moist lips. For the first time since he had seen the face and figure of the dazzling Dambrine, he felt the need of unburdening himself to someone.

"I am not in trouble," he said shortly.

Monsieur Bofourdin smiled.

"Ha—then it is love! Tell me of her lips, m'sieu."

Lucien found himself speaking as if the words of the other had been his cue. He made a passionate gesture.

"Red! *Mon Dieu!* the red of the cocktail cherry, and curved like the bow of Cupid!"

The other, still smiling, nodded.

"Exactly. And her hair?"

Lucien, now thoroughly aroused, leaned a little way across the table.

"Red also," he cried; "red as the setting sun in the valley of the Seine! It seems, monsieur, a flame!"

Bofourdin, for the first time, frowned and shook his head.

"For the lips, *oui*—for the hair, no," he said as if to himself. "I know!"

He looked up, his smile reappearing. "And her face?"

Lucien drained his seventh glass and wiped a tear from the corner of his eye.

"Words fail," he declared sadly. "I can tell you of her mouth and hair, but of her eyes, face and figure, ask me not, I beg you—my vocabulary is limited. Picture if you can the figure of de Milo, the face of Clavigand's 'Desire of the Moth,' the eyes of a Helen. Picture these, my good friend, and you have but a faint impression of what Maxine is."

The other gave him a sharp glance.

"Maxine?"

Lucien nodded.

"Dambrine," he supplied simply.

"Now you can see how useless it is."

For a minute there was a tense silence. Then Bofourdin struck the table a violent blow.

"Name of a small black dog!" he cried excitedly. "I see it all! I see it all now! *You* must be the man!"

Lucien looked stupidly over at him.

"What man?" he asked.

Bofourdin glanced cautiously about and lowered his voice to a confidential pitch.

"Tell me, monsieur," he said rapidly, "have you been to the Théâtre Malesherbes of late, a number of times?"

Lucien nodded.

"Every other night."

The other leaned across the table, picked up one of the young man's limp hands and shook it.

"Monsieur," he said, "she has been asking for you—she has been searching for you—she has even wept for you! I know! It was but yesterday that she summoned me to her. 'Go,' she said, 'go seek and find the man with the'"—He stopped and cleared his throat.

"You wore a dress-suit?"

Lucien, bewildered, nodded weakly.

"Go," she said, "and find the man with the dress-suit," Bofourdin went on: "he who sits nightly—or almost nightly—in silent worship before me. He who haunts the—er—stage door. Find him, Bofourdin, for it is to him whom my heart belongs!"

The young man from the Café of the First Shell let his jaw sag and eyed the other as he might a lunatic.

The little man noted this and raised a protesting forefinger.

"But wait!" he ordered sternly. "I can read your thoughts. Monsieur thinks I am the greatest liar of the present age, perhaps, or one insane. I know! Let me prove to you the veracity of my statement. Let me prove that Maxine Dambrine is as madly in love with you as you are with her! She described you perfectly to me. She even told me of the color of your hair and eyes. I am her manager, m'sieu, as you can see by the program you no doubt are keeping, and as her manager I obey her slightest command. I take it upon myself to bring you both together. It will cost you money, monsieur, but it must be done! Think of it, even now she weeps for you!"

Lucien, completely upset by the rapid turn of events, and with heart and pulses throbbing madly, attained his feet.

"Give me the address!" he said unsteadily. "Give me her address and let me go to her! *Sacre!* to weep for me!"

The other waved him back to his chair.

"But wait," he said gently, "the address, certainly, but not now. Things must be arranged. This cannot be done on the impulse of the moment. You are letting your emotions run away with your judgment. As her manager, m'sieu, I could not allow you to see her in your present condition. It would be unsafe for you both."

Lucien sat down.

"What am I to do?" he asked dully. Bofourdin, finishing his liqueur, knitted his brows in thought.

"A meeting shall be arranged immediately," he said after a moment. "Tell me, you have money?"

"I have saved two hundred francs," Lucien answered proudly.

Bofourdin frowned.

"It is not much," he said, "but it will have to suffice. Draw it from the bank

and come here to-morrow night, at this hour, to this table. I will await you here."

He stood up.

"But—but—two hundred francs," Lucien faltered.

Bofourdin made a sweeping gesture of annoyance.

"You haggle?" he said coldly. "You compare a paltry two hundred francs with the divine fire of love? You place cash above the love of one who weeps for you? Monsieur, you fill me with contempt!"

"A moment!" Lucien begged as he saw the little man turn to leave. "It shall be as you wish."

Bofourdin turned back to the table again.

"Good! You are, after all, the eternal lover. To-morrow night, then, at this hour. *Bon nuit!*"

When he had gone, Lucien saw he had quite forgotten to pay for his liqueur. He settled with the waiter and from the depths of his pocket produced a torn program.

His eyes fell on the line

MAXINE DAMBRINE  
(M. Bofourdin, Director)

and he studied it a moment, a great happiness welling up within him. Every dream was soon to come true.

"Oh—Maxine," he murmured.

\* \* \*

Promptly on the hour, the following evening, Monsieur Bofourdin, a trifle more unkempt and shabby, appeared. Lucien, who had arrived first, sprang up and pulled out a chair for the little man.

"You have the money?" was his first question. Lucien nodded. "Give it to me."

Without a word, the young man passed his roll of paper across the table. The other skimmed through it, nodded and slipped it into the pocket of his coat.

"All is arranged. Mademoiselle is at present living incognito on the Boulevard La Fayette, number sixty-two.



The name is Astaire. Here"—he produced a key and winked—"is the key for the door of her apartments. She gave it to me this morning. Go there this night after the performance, on the hour of twelve, and you will be received and welcomed.

"Two arms are waiting, monsieur, two red lips, two dark eyes and—all for you! Does the picture not fire you? Ah, that I might be in your shoes!"

Lucien, with trembling fingers, dropped the key in his pocket and stammered his thanks. Bofourdin cut him short with a gesture.

"Enough!" He picked up the menu. "And now you may order a little supper in honor of all the happiness that is soon to be yours."

At ten minutes of twelve, the two shook hands on the curb outside of the café. With difficulty, Bofourdin restrained the impetuous youth from embracing him. They shook hands again and parted—Lucien to hail a passing taxicab.

As the clock in the tower of the Church St. Anthony chimed the hour of midnight, the taxicab drew up before number 62 on the Boulevard La Fayette and Lucien alighted, paid the driver and entered the building.

He was admitted, and presently, his heart thumping against his ribs, he found himself before a door which bore the neatly lettered sign "ASTAIRE." Drawing a deep, full breath, he inserted the key in the door, opened it and entered.

The room was a lounge or den and charmingly appointed. Two shaded lamps cast a mellow glow on the tapestries and Turkish rugs that sprawled over the floor. A white antique mantel held an onyx clock, ticking slow, and a quaint silver vase of Hungarian design in which had been placed an enormous bunch of purple violets. The chairs were heavy, deeply upholstered and inviting.

Lucien, embarrassed and a little afraid now that he was really here, sank down into one of them, twisting his hat

nervously between his hands. What should he say—what should he do? It was one thing, he knew, to dream of her, quite another to meet her face to face. Would it be tactful, he asked himself, if he mentioned her tears? Or should he state simply why he was here and who he was—this, of course, if she failed to recognize him in the half-light.

A sudden footfall interrupted his meditation, and, turning, he saw between the velvet portières that curtained off the room from another the slim young figure of the dancer.

She wore a spangled evening gown of black, and it accentuated her dead-white face, her Titian hair and the red of her full lips. One slender hand held the curtains back and Lucien, gasping at the picture she made, saw her dark eyes were tired. She looked at him, her lips parted.

Silent they faced each other for a moment. Then Lucien found his tongue.

"Oh—Maxine!" he whispered hoarsely. "I have come."

She took a step forward, the curtains falling behind her.

"You wish to see Marie?" she asked.

"M-Marie?" Lucien stammered.

"My maid."

He arose, his hat under his arm.

"I am Lucien—the man in the dress-suit," he said simply. "Bofourdin sent me. *Sacre!* You do not recognize me and your eyes are dry! Mam'selle, I am the one you have searched for."

She seated herself, crossed her rounded legs and from a smoking-table beside her extracted a thin, perfumed cigarette.

"There must be some mistake—or else it is the same game," she said in a low, quiet voice. "You say Bofourdin sent you?"

Lucien nodded.

"A short while ago. He gave me this key."

At the word "key" a glimmer of anger glowed in her slumberous eyes. She inclined her head.

"And what did you give him?" she asked in a hard voice. "Money?"

In a few words Lucien told her all—of his seeing her first—his dreams—of the ruined glacé and the peppered Beef Milan—how he had met the shabby little man at the café and of his two hundred francs. When he had finished she drew open a drawer in the table and produced a photograph. This she handed him.

"Is this the man?"

Lucien scanned it.

"Oui!"

She tossed it carelessly back in the drawer.

"I thought so. Monsieur Jamarat, I am sorry to inform you that inasmuch as my manager is in Bordeaux, you have been duped. You are not the first one, m'sieur, but you shall be the last, I promise you that."

She arose and sauntered to the door. Lucien, feeling as though he had been suddenly immersed in ice-water, followed.

"Your two hundred francs shall be returned," she said, opening

the door. "I am sorry—good night!"

Lucien, among the ruins of his dream-castle, passed out and into the hall. Words failed him, but he finally managed again to speak.

"But—but your tears?"

She gave him a cool look.

"I have none—if I had I would shed them for the rogue who has been making a living by selling keys of my apartment."

The door slowly, but surely, was being closed on him. Despair reached out, claimed him and his heart sank.

"One question," he begged earnestly. "You have his picture. You know him?"

Only the fire of her eyes was visible in the gloom.

"To my sorrow, yes," she replied. "He is a man I cast from me years ago. A man with no ambition. A man who would rather share my earnings than work. His name is François Astaire and he is—in name only—my husband!"



## THE INVITATION

By Lucretia H. Burgan

**Y**OU think I am asking you to dance.  
 But I am asking you to come out into the clover field  
 And see the drunken bees  
 Nosing their stumbling way into the flowers.  
 I am asking you to watch the butterflies  
 That I may take delight in your beauty  
 While you are watching theirs.  
 I am asking you to walk the pebbly beach with me  
 That I may see your dainty scamper  
 When the long line of white waves comes  
 Swishing and curling at your feet.  
 I am asking you to come out against the western sky  
 That I may compare your beauty  
 In your little grey dress  
 To the gorgeousness of the dying sun—  
 But you think I am asking you to dance.

# THE VAUDEVILLE SHOW

By Charles G. Shaw

THE fifty cent tickets that cost two dollars.  
The friend who fumbles but doesn't pay a cent.  
The seat from which you see one-fifth of the stage.  
The drunk next to you.  
The woman and child in front.  
The loving couple behind.  
The bicycle act.  
The old stunts.  
The song and dance artist.  
The oldest jokes in the world.  
The clumsy dancing.  
The weak skit.  
The drunk who goes to sleep.  
The man who talks to the orchestra leader.  
The Musical Mollusks.  
The trick instruments they play.  
The vile tunes.  
The suggestion about leaving.  
The friend who wants to stay.  
The trained seals.  
The groan.  
The child that commences bawling.  
The drunk who awakes.  
The angry drunk.  
The scene he has with the child's mother.  
The usher who throws him out.  
The punk magician.  
The man who knows how every trick is done.  
The soubrette who sings.  
The spot-light they throw on you.  
The song at your expense.  
The "big laugh" on you.  
The attempt to repeat it.  
The foul language you use.  
The people who think you're part of the show.  
The hat and coat.  
The hurried exit.  
The street.  
The Zoo.



# THE FASTIDIOUS LOVER

By M. R. Cram

I DON'T know whether you have ever run across Fitz Carroll? Never?

That's surprising. I thought nearly everyone knew old Fitz. He and his wife have that astounding house out at Bernardsville—the Italian villa, you know. It is an exact copy of a place at Careggi—terraces, cypress alley, garden and all. And, inside, it might be five hundred years old—frescoed ceilings, carved Italian staircase, tapestries, della Robbia over the fireplace, a real Bellini—amazing!

Ever hear Fitz's love story? Oh, I don't mean his real love story. We all know he is as keen as a whip about his wife. But he married Sarah fifteen years ago. I mean that awful scrape he got himself in for last winter. Never heard about it? I thought everyone knew—

Fitz is about forty-five now and looks thirty-five, probably because he keeps himself so fit. Personally the only thing I have against him is that he dances a little too well. It always sends shivers down my spine when I see an able-bodied man pointing his toes, crooking his little finger and smiling the Ballet Russe smile with his eyes closed. Then, too, he wears a soft tucked shirt with his evening clothes. We Englishmen— I may be too conservative, but you must admit that soft shirts are a trifle too artistic. Eh?

I've told you the worst about him. He is a cool hand at polo and plays a fair game of golf and is a first-rate shot. Then, too, he does all the things young men of his generation seem to enjoy. He likes music, and composes a little, and he has published a little book of verses and he likes to tog him-

self out in gorgeous silks and jewels and go to a fancy-dress ball. You've never seen him—he looks exactly like a Chinese mandarin. He and Sarah gave a dance at their Bernardsville place last summer, and he appeared wearing a cloth-of-gold coat, a purple Chinese cap and jade jewelry. I remember that he carried a little scarlet fan. In my day—

Oh, well, this is a new generation. Fitz is all right. Women are crazy about him. He knows just how to talk to them, just how to look into their eyes. He seldom has a failure, once he sets out to charm. Sarah has always known that Fitz likes women, but he is so apparently tied to her own apron-strings that she never worried about him. As soon as one of his flirtations bored him he fled to Sarah and implored her to rescue him from it. Sarah knew exactly how. She began to pay a good deal of attention to Fitz, demanded a lot of his time, took him off on motor trips, held his hand under the dinner-table (rather too conspicuously), and talked to the other women about her "dear boy." She would take Fitz's *inamorata* to one side and enlarge on his virtues, his talents, his good looks, until the poor creature begged for mercy.

No woman in the world wants to waste her affection on a man whose wife isn't jealous of him. An affair with a "model husband" smacks of the *bourgeoisie*.

Sarah and Fitz were smart. They lived uncommonly well. Sarah's dinners, her week-end parties, her little dances were always well done. She was well done herself; turned out from



top to toe by the best dressmakers in the world, impeccable, sleek, groomed to the last golden hair of her head. Her jewels were good; not too many and not too large, but every inconspicuous pearl had its pedigree. She managed men with just the right amount of a gleam in her eye and just the proper balm on the tip of her tongue, keeping them just where she wanted them. And you can imagine, with her beauty and the perfection of her background, she had her baker's dozen of hopeless worshippers. There was a distinguished Jew in her train, a young American aristocrat and a handful of "lions." Sarah knew how to make her lions roar. Her pianist played docilely, her singers sang and her novelists were reckless with epigrams. She had the "chic"—

Fitz always has had an uncommonly good time. It is amusing, living with a woman like Sarah. He used to tell me that his flirtations with other women made his rebounds to Sarah something like a new infatuation for her. She used to enjoy seeing how far she could let him go before she tightened the reins. She really loved him; I'm convinced of that. She loved his poetic streak, his charming manners, the eternal interest he took in making love. The night he wore that Mandarin costume, Sarah drifted about in his silk-clad arms with a dreamy smile. Anyone could see that Fitz was improvising Chinese love couplets and whispering them to her. That kind of a man can find someone to listen to him until he is ninety.

But Fitz didn't think so! He got to be forty-four and took to speaking of himself as "old fellows like me" and was everlastingly preoccupied with his waist-line and the thinness of his hair. Sarah was too interested, just then, in her French war orphans, to notice the symptoms. And Fitz, left alone, cast about for sympathy.

He found it at last at a studio-dance. And, of all things, with a no one in particular, a girl who wrote clever little things and eked out about a hundred

dollars a month that way. She lived on it, somehow, in an apartment uptown, where, Fitz told me, you had to go through a glittering marble Arabian Nights Dream hallway to get to the elevator, and once in her apartment had to maneuver to turn around in the two-by-four drawing-room.

Her name was Agatha. She wrote highly perverse paragraphs, but she was really as innocent as a baa-lamb. To begin with, Fitz didn't quite understand. In his set, the low-voiced, large-eyed, trembling woman is usually a dangerous person, or a stupid one.

She fell in love with him at that studio party. And no wonder. He was wrapped in scented silks, turbaned, his face stained brown, his green eyes smudged up with blue paint, his fingers covered with rings—some of them Sarah's! And he danced with the little Agatha like Nijinsky and Mordkin rolled together. She forgot to say any of her naughty nothings to him. She simply announced to him, as he took her home in a taxi somewhere toward dawn, that he was the personification of her dreams.

And Fitz fell for it. Oh, completely. Here she was, young, beautiful, and intelligent. And she loved him—the poor, obscure little creature loved him. Fitz beamed at her, he kissed the tips of her ink-stained fingers, he became at one bound Fitz the invincible lover. It only needs a little encouragement, even at forty-four, to put his sort of a harmless egoist back on his pedestal.

After that, he saw a great deal of Agatha. She, poor dear, fancied that he was unhappy with Sarah and was awfully, awfully sorry for him! She was the most guileless little person he had ever met. She liked the maresi, so you can imagine how easy it was to amuse her. She was very earnest, very sincere, and wept when he spoke of himself as an "old man." Fitz never dreamed of kissing her. It was all very nice and romantic and no one in the world would believe it. I got it from Sarah, who says that she is perfectly

sure that Fitz behaved like a knight-errant.

If Sarah had known about Fitz's flyer in love to begin with, she could have stopped him before he got too entangled. But she had gone to California, and Fitz was stopping at the town house. No one saw him for two months, and Sarah finally heard of it. Of course she started East.

In the meantime Fitz began to believe that he was in love with Agatha and bought a vacuum cap for his hair and went to a new tailor. She was the sort of girl who puts her hand on your arm and looks up at the stars and says: "Wouldn't you love to go West and ride out into the desert and camp at night in the alfalfa and listen to the coyotes howl? See how cool and white the stars are—I would love the silence of great spaces—"

And all the rest of it. Fitz really liked the most effete and finished people. He was no cowboy! He liked a dinner table set with rare lace and old silver better than a camp-fire picnic; he liked the hum of witty conversation better than a coyote's shrieking. He liked beautiful clothes and expensive jewels and well-trained servants. Coyotes and alfalfa and cool stars! Good Lord! He was the finished product; fastidious, spoiled, but a man of taste. It stands to reason that Agatha, even with her candid eyes full of love for him, couldn't hold him very long. Fitz wasn't cut out for sneaking about to the movies and to out-of-the-way restaurants and winding up every evening in a Harlem flat.

As soon as Sarah got back East, she opened the house at Bernardsville. Fitz haunted the terrace like a distraught spirit, his hands in his pockets, his brows knit, sighing occasional deep sighs. Sarah saw that something was wrong when he suddenly bolted to town without any adequate or reasonable excuse. And, of course, like a wise woman, she said nothing at all.

A week later, he came back again, looking harrowed and pale. Sarah waited for him to confess, as he always

had confessed. And finally he did. He went up to her on the terrace one evening and slipped his arm around her waist.

"Great night, eh, Sarah? Stars, and all that sort of thing. What does it make you think of?"

Sarah considered a moment. "Venice," she said finally, "and the evening we spent at the Vincent's *palazzo*. Do you remember how amusing Peruzzi was? And little Lurma Giammatica, when she recited some of d'Annunzio's sonnets for us, outside on the balcony—remember, Fitz? How warm and thrilling her voice was! I remember how the stars trailed their reflections like fiery streamers in the Canal."

Fitz winced suddenly as if some memory had stabbed him. "You like what I like, Sarah. . . . I say, I've gone and done it now, Sarah."

"Done what, Fitz? You've not been making yourself too charming while I was away?"

"I fancy so. Confound it! I've—well, to tell the honest truth, Sarah, a girl's in love with me. Oh, awfully. A nice girl. Not anyone you know—just a girl who—who writes. Dammit all, Sarah, she's a corker. And she loves me. And she expects me to marry her. If I don't, she'll do something—awful. She says so. Isn't it rotten luck? . . . Oh, Sarah, say something! For God's sake don't act as if I were a confounded bounder!"

"She loves you, Fitz?"

"Yes, like anything."

"Do you want to marry her?"

"Oh, not for anything in God's world! It wouldn't do. I like her awfully. But she would find me out in a week. And she's not like you; she couldn't hold on to me. Oh, you're a wonderful woman, Sarah. No one ever understands like you. . . . You see, she didn't know how to play my game my way. She played it her way—up-state sentimentality, farmer's daughter sort of thing. She worries about my health and buys me woolen mufflers and—why—good Lord, Sarah, I feel like a rural lover 'keeping com-

pany' with my best girl. It's awful. It's appalling! But it's the real thing with her; somehow I feel that way down underneath it's a desperate thing. . . . See here, you'll help me out of it, won't you? You will?"

Sarah considered a moment. Then she faced Fitz with a quiet, steady look in her fine eyes. "I'm not so sure that it isn't your fault. I'm not so sure that you ought not to marry her and face it out. But I am sorry for her, so sorry that I wouldn't let her marry you even if you begged me, both of you on your knees. I know you, right down to the ground. It is an awful mistake to tell a man you see through him as if he were a piece of glass. But I am taking the risk. I can live with you only because I understand you the way I do. And that doesn't mean that I don't like you. I do. I am even foolish enough to love you, Fitz." Sarah turned away from him again. "Now tell me her name and where she lives. I'll go to her."

And she did. She motored into town, found the Aladdin's Lamp apartment-house in Harlem and was announced to Agatha by a bored and languid negro, who murmured "Mrs. Carroll to see you," through a speaking-tube.

"You can go up," he said, with a nod to Sarah.

Agatha was waiting by the open door of her apartment.

"I am Fitz's wife," Sarah said. "May I come in?"

Agatha stood aside, with a little gesture of assent.

Sarah looked around the two-by-four drawing-room before she spoke. Then she met Agatha's eyes.

"Fitz has told me," she said, "all about you. He's fond of you. He doesn't want to hurt you. . . . So he's letting me do it for him. You have made these past two months very happy for him and I am grateful to you for that. Oh, yes, honestly, my dear. Fitz is the very devil to live with when he isn't amused. Some of the time, when

I am not too busy, I amuse him myself, and the rest of the time I let other women do it. He is worth taking a lot of trouble for. He has a charming mind, he is talented, and when he wants to give you the best that is in him he is one of the most delightful creatures on earth. I always feel that the women he makes love to have had a choice experience, a very rare and poetical experience, and so I am never sorry for them. I am only sorry for myself, because I have to wait, sometimes, a weary while before my turn comes again. But it always comes again, because I am the sort of woman who can make Fitz happy nine times out of ten. I can give him what he is used to, what he really admires—the *chic*, my dear. If I should divorce him now and let him marry you he would lose all his friends, because they like me a whole lot and they'd snub him for my sake, in spite of anything I could say or do. He is too old to start life again. You and I both love him. I propose that each of us sacrifices herself a little—you give him up and I'll take him on again." Sarah smiled rather ruefully. "And mine is the bigger sacrifice." She held out her hand. "Is that a go?"

"Does he know you are saying these things to me?"

"Of course."

"Then it's a go." She took Sarah's hand, pressed it slightly and turned to the door. "Good-bye now. And thank you."

Sarah told me that she felt horribly snubbed. No heroics at all, mind you, just a perfectly calm, almost frozen dignity. Sarah had looked for dramatic reproaches, hysteria—these girls who write are usually emotional. But Agatha shut Sarah out as if she were a meddler, with her nose in the air and an Elsie Ferguson gesture of noble resignation, and the flicker of a sarcastic smile. It was good behavior, that part of it. Sarah went back to Bernardsville with a momentary sense of having been beaten.

Fitz was waiting on the terrace. "Well," he asked, "is it all right?"

Sarah looked at him with a flash of antagonism in her eyes. "I don't know. Wait and see."

\* \* \*

That night the girl killed herself. She got hold of a pistol somehow and shot herself through the heart. Elaborate suicide. Vulgar as the very devil. She left a letter for the police to see, with the whole story—Fitz's name, Sarah's name . . . Whole wretched thing on the first page of the morning paper the next day, in letters a foot high. You can fancy how sorry we were for poor old Fitz. It was such shocking bad taste on the girl's part. Middle-class trick, that letter.

If she had died and kept still Sarah and Fitz would never have forgiven themselves. I think Sarah would have left him. I saw Sarah the other day

for the first time since the thing happened.

"Don't you see, Walter," she said, "that Fitz could never have been happy with that sort of woman? She didn't have the *chic*. She could have killed herself with such a magnificent gesture—in silence, without succumbing to the temptation of writing a confession on violet note paper in the penny-a-word style! I'm not heartless, Walter. I simply see that she didn't understand Fitz." She leaned toward me and lowered her voice, and there was a sparkle in her eyes. "Now little Malvina Kerr—he's riding with her to-day. She's his sort—a sportswoman, keen as a whip, sure of herself, the very devil of a flirt. He's no end amused. . . . Ah, Walter, after all, I know how to manage him."



## HEREAFTER

By Ebert E. Boylan

HE got up that morning feeling that something was due to happen.

He ate his breakfast food with the same premonition.

Neither his morning paper nor the ham and eggs fulfilled his expectation.

The car was as crowded as ever.

The stenographer and the bookkeeper were nervously slipping into their places as he entered.

A rabble of drab clouds over the bay twenty stories below.

Mildewed remembrances of a nauseating cocktail and show.

Everything apparently as always.

Except for an engraved card, "The Palace at 2:45."

And an occasional glint of wings as some angel went by

Bearing notice to some other sleeper

Of his forthcoming audience with the Ruler of Heaven.



WHEN a husband's story is believed, he grows suspicious of his wife.





# APOTHEOSIS

By Louis B. Capron

**I** TOWER colossal on a gigantic mountain peak and the elements battle about me. The storm beats against my body. I grapple with the rain-heavy gale, heaving and straining against me like a giant wrestler. The thunder cannons in my ears and the lightning splits from hem to hem the black pall that shrouds the world. Yet in my heart there is no fear.

I shout defiance to the earth and to the heavens. My voice reverberates over the barren rocks, hurled from hill to hill in thundering echoes.

I have found my mate. Man, Daemon or God, I defy you to tear her from me. Let me do battle for her. Match strength to strength. You cannot conquer, for I am invincible.

Strike! Thor! Strike with your shattering thunder. You can crumble that

primeval crag to smoky dust. You can bring that stalwart oak crashing down in a thousand blackened splinters. But me you cannot harm. I am invulnerable.

In my arteries the blood thunders like a tossing glacial torrent. My lungs are swollen with the raw mountain air. My mighty muscles throb for some prodigious task.

In my arms urges the strength of a Hercules. In my limbs is the fleetness of the lightning. I am huge, mammoth with the bigness of the Titans.

I spurn the earth. I leap from mountain crag to mountain crag. I cleave the bespangled sky above the laden clouds. I hurl myself from star to star.

I am triumphant. I have found a heart. I have won my mate.



# ANNETTE

By George Briggs

I took her in my arms and rained kisses upon her lips,  
Though I would not have cared if she were dead,  
To-morrow.

She responded to my caresses,  
Even though she was doubtful about the pronunciation of my name.

This is how  
She enjoyed her first ride in a taxi-cab.



# TEMPERAMENT

By Maverick Terrell

## THE PUPPETS:

WILBERFORCE WHITEHEAD (*in private life, Jimmy Boggs*), an eminent vaudevillian.

ROGER GREENE ABBOTT, a dramatist.

MISS WHITLA DAVIES, Mr. Whitehead's support.

SCENE: Mr. Whitehead's star dressing-room in the sub-basement of the Marlowe Theatre, that well-known temple of the two-a-day.

TIME: After the evening performance.

WHITEHEAD AND DAVIES, the headliners of the current bill, have just "come off" upstairs, and the male member of the team is panting heavily in a chair. Mr. Whitehead, who is no longer young, finds the "smash" finish to their act, "High Diddle- Duddle," a madcap dance, a severe tax on his somewhat chunky legs. The door to his dressing-room is closed and the great actor is alone. A moment is given him for pleasurable self-contemplation, and then the door is rudely jerked open, and his fair associate projects herself into the room. She bangs the door and so guards against Mr. Whitehead's getaway. Mr. Whitehead, giving her a prudent glance, decides to remain where he is. Miss Davies contemplates him biliously, with arms dramatically folded, and emits occasionally a volcanic snort of indignation. To clear the atmosphere, Mr. Whitehead elaborately lights a cigarette. The fight is on.

## MISS DAVIES

(The lady, in aspect, testifies to her professional veneration of Valeska Surratt, Eva Tanguay and Sarah Bernhardt. She is neither thin nor fat, long nor short, Junoesque nor petite, chicken nor chic, old nor young; she is, for all her make-up, just her own dear, sweet self. At the moment she is preparing for her celebrated imitation of Mont Pelée, and since she is off the stage, her acting is excellent.)

Well?..

## MR. WHITEHEAD

(The eminent comedian is a sad spectacle. More, even, than his broth-

ers of the comic mask, he resembles an Ozark houn' dog who has been left out on the doorstep all night. As for more intimate details, Mr. Whitehead is mostly short. True to the traditions of his art, his visible teeth are inlaid with gold. Mr. Whitehead, psychically, is a man of strong metal, presumably brass.)

Well? (He is noted for the sting of his repartees.) Well, as well as you could expect.

(A snort from Mont Pelée.)

## MISS DAVIES

This is the last week you're goin' to have to crab my stuff, understand?

MR. WHITEHEAD

(*Magnanimously.*) You're nuts! Crab your stuff! You were tryin' to throw me all the way through. (*Forgetting for a moment he is off the stage.*) If you wasn't a woman I'd give you a clout back of the ear!

MISS DAVIES

(*Equally professional.*) Strike me! You—you—viper! (*This last is hissed.*) You broke up the act in Winnipeg, you put all of my gags on the fritz in Calgary and you stole all my laughs in Vancouver. Now I'm through with you, Mr. Boggs. (*At this, the great actor shivers.*)

MR. WHITEHEAD

Now look here, Minnie, for Gawd's sake—

MISS DAVIES

You can't Minnie me. Slow on that soft-soap stuff. You can't tie my goat outside, kid!

MR. WHITEHEAD

Now look here, Minnie, what the hell's the use of you and I quarrellin' just as we got the act goin' great? Even the bookin' agents are laughin' at it.

MISS DAVIES

I got your number, Wilberforce Whitehead, and don't you forget it. You can't pull any of that old stuff on me, y'understand? Do you or don't you come through?

MR. WHITEHEAD

(*Wearily.*) I thought that was all fixed. Gawd, if I ever act with another woman as long as I live, shoot me for a dog! I spoil 'em.

MISS DAVIES

Like hell you do? You come through with that hundred and fifty before Saturday night, or the act closes, get me? This time it's business. You've fooled me before.

MR. WHITEHEAD

(*Considerably upstage.*) Fooled you!

MISS DAVIES

I been too kind to you ever since I took you up.

MR. WHITEHEAD

(*Almost a shriek.*) You took me up! You took me up! Say that again!

MISS DAVIES

Yes, and you'd be still doin' the five-a-day with moving pictures as a chaser if it hadn't been for me. I'm the pep of the act and I'm goin' to show it to you. Wait till we split. Take me out of the act and it's like a balloon without air—nothing but the bag left!

MR. WHITEHEAD

(*Sensing a cue for action, gets up, throws his cigarette down, stamps on it as John Drew does and starts toward the lady threateningly.*) Now I've taken all the lip from you I'm goin' to. Give a woman too much rope and she's ruind. Every house manager's been kickin' about the act all along the line. And it's you—you're the nigger in the wood yard, you're breakin' up the act with your damn jealousy. Now if you'd be sensible—

MISS DAVIES

Yes, and forget the hundred and fifty. I know you, Boggs. You can't fool me. I ain't put up with you for nothin'.

MR. WHITEHEAD

You bet you ain't. You got all that was comin' to you and more. I been feedin' you like a queen in real restaurants ever since we left Chicago, stoppin' in the best hotels, and all that luxury. No man ever did more for no woman.

MISS DAVIES

Huh, you mean no actor. You comedians make me sick! It's been the same thing every time we get down to talkin' business. You temporize and temporize and temporize.

MR. WHITEHEAD

Cut the "East Lynne" stuff. Talk English. You know you're a lady.

MISS DAVIES

You don't win nothin' with that kind of language with me. There ain't nobody that can say I ain't no lady. Gawd knows I've spent enough makin' my-

self one. You and I, Mr. Boggs, have come to the splittin' of the ways.

MR. WHITEHEAD

Aw, Minnie, don't be foolish, just as we got the act beat in shape.

MISS DAVIES

This is final. We're at the partin' of the ways, you and me, after Saturday night, takes different roads, and you needn't to go down on your knees to me, like last time, when you was soused in Duluth and you didn't let me in on it. *(Critics have frequently referred to Miss Davies as full of spirit. Sometimes they were right.)* Either you come through with that hundred and fifty before Saturday, or you don't—and you can send all the telegrams to Chicago you want to. I'll see that this act without me don't hold the bookin'. And you back to the five-a-day, where you belong—with that—that Spanish onion.

MR. WHITEHEAD

That's right. Heap insults on her. And she a perfect lady, which is more than you are now. She ain't never said nothin' about you.

MISS DAVIES

Yes, and she better not. I'll shake all the garlic out of her if she does. You can explain from now till Doomsday, Boggs, but you can't explain why I happened to catch her in your dressing-room that night.

MR. WHITEHEAD

Am I to blame because she gets a stomach-ache and comes in for medicine? I remember because I'd just bought a pint that night.

MISS DAVIES

Why, you pusillanimous little rat—tryin' to hand me that old stuff! Stomach-ache! I suppose the next time she'll have frostbite, eh? Why, you—Gawd! You get me so mad that I forget what I am!

MR. WHITEHEAD

You little devil! You get out! Get out of here quick! I'll have the man-

ager throw you out of the theater before I get through. You tryin' to tell me my business! Get out before I forget myself!

*(At this milady makes a sudden dart of her hand into her bodice and tugs at whatever is concealed therein. Mr. Whitehead forms his own interpretation.)*

MISS DAVIES

You—you—you—!

MR. WHITEHEAD

Don't you pull a knife on me! Don't you pull a knife on me! *(Business of trembling by Mr. Whitehead faithfully portrayed.)*

MISS DAVIES

*(Pulls out a big gob of gum and sticks it in her mouth and with supreme contempt goes to the door.)* I ain't never seen a man yet that could stand up to a woman when she's mad. Go back to your Spanish dancer. I'm through with you, you little hound. You can squeal all you want to, but I'm through with you.

MR. WHITEHEAD

I understand you.

MISS DAVIES

Well, you'd better. Ain't goin' to cheat me out of any hundred and fifty dollars like that. *(Throws the door open and goes out. Her footsteps are heard going up the concrete staircase. Mr. Whitehead, being cautious by nature, listens a moment until the footsteps cease; then a sudden anger rises and overcomes him. He holds the door so that it can be closed quickly if necessary.)*

MR. WHITEHEAD

That's what I get for spoilin' you. I been too good to you. I spent too much money on you, I wasted too much time—well, it's all off. I wouldn't go back to you. I wouldn't have you in the act if you were the last woman in the world. We close Saturday. I ain't goin' to allow no woman to tell me where I head in. Thank God, I'm



through with you for good! *(Somebody suddenly shoves the door open. Mr. Whitehead looks like a frightened rabbit. On seeing Mr. Abbott as he enters the color comes slowly back to his grease-painted face.)*

MR. ABBOTT

*(Mr. Abbott is also short, mostly, and has a weakness for eating three times a day. Otherwise he is as near human as a writer who associates with actors can ever get.)*

What the devil's the matter, Jimmy? You look as though you'd seen a ghost. And the old bird cut me on the stairs.

MR. WHITEHEAD

*(On coming down at least six degrees barometrically.)* Abb, you had my goat for a minute. I thought it was her back again. Say, she is some vixen.

MR. ABBOTT

Well, you're no William Jennings Bryan yourself when it comes to peace. She got a tantrum?

MR. WHITEHEAD

Crazy as a bedbug! Wants me to pay her what I owe her.

MR. ABBOTT

Well, you have to, Jimmy, once in a while, to hold 'em. Women are queer fish. Aw, it'll blow over.

MR. WHITEHEAD

Not on your life! This time it's all off. Take it from me, I know. She's been like a bear with a thorn in its foot. It was bad enough in Winnipeg; now it's impossible. We close Saturday night. It's inevitable. *(A tragic gesture.)*

MR. ABBOTT

Well, that's what you get for taking up with her.

MR. WHITEHEAD

Well, hell, somebody's got to take up with her! But it's all off now. I've made up my mind definitely. Besides, I got somethin' on her that'll put her to the bad if she springs any legal stuff.

MR. ABBOTT

Legal stuff, eh? She's going to touch you up? Why, she wouldn't dare pull any of that court stuff.

MR. WHITEHEAD

Little you know her. She'll pull anything when she's in this frame of mind. I tell you we're down to the last straw. *(Pulls paper from his pocket.)* Here's a little interesting reading that would make his honor sit up and take notice. Have I ever shown this to you, Abb? Cost me a little money to get the Pinks to do it.

MR. ABBOTT

I get you. Follow-up stuff, eh? It's a good thing to have the past performances of the lady, Some traveler, eh?

MR. WHITEHEAD

Look at the list. The best jockies, the best managers, there's a couple of English titles in it, and a booking agent. She's been popular.

MR. ABBOTT

Now, look here, Jimmy, can't I help out on this? I kind of feel responsible. I wrote the act.

MR. WHITEHEAD

*(Who has the professional idea of the writer as a writer.)* Don't let that worry you, Abb. You did give me the idea and a couple of good gags.

MR. ABBOTT

The hell I did! I wrote the act just as you put it on, word for word, and there isn't a gag in it that I didn't suggest.

MR. WHITEHEAD

Say, Abb, you're a good friend of mine. Want to do me a favor?

MR. ABBOTT

There isn't a single gag that gets over that I didn't suggest or write or steal or beg or borrow or build. *(Mr. Abbott is young; he takes writing for actors seriously.)*

MR. WHITEHEAD

*(Paying no attention to Mr. Ab-*

*bott's lament.*) Now this is the favor, Abb. Of course it ain't goin' to cure the situation, but it'll let me get out of here to-night alive. Why, that woman tried to pull a knife on me a few minutes ago, a foot long.

MR. ABBOTT

Why, the best laugh in the act is that line about the rooster. That's good enough for the Follies and you say that I—

MR. WHITEHEAD

*(Good-naturedly.)* Now, here's the favor, Abb. You see the madame is nuts about the Spanish Girl. You know her, the one across the way. *(Points to opposite side of dressing-rooms.)* You know, O'Rourke, the blonde—no, that's so, she's brunette this year.

MR. ABBOTT

Well, I know her. What about her?

MR. WHITEHEAD

Well, you see, I had a date to take her to supper to-night and I think Minnie is on. She'll be comin' down soon to break it up, and if she does, well—

MR. ABBOTT

And you want me to take the girl out in your place; is that it? This O'Rourke?

MR. WHITEHEAD

Yes, and tell Minnie that you're goin' to do it and that you're nutty about her and always were—that's more important.

MR. ABBOTT

And O'Rourke Irish and with an appetite like a dray horse! And who's goin' to pay for it?

MR. WHITEHEAD

Me, of course, naturally. Eat all you want to, and don't forget to remind me of it Saturday night.

MR. ABBOTT

Now, look here, Jimmy, I can't—  
*(At this point the door opens and Miss Davies stands silhouetted on the*

*threshold. During the talk with Abbott, Whitehead has removed his grease paint and resumed his normal color.)*

MISS DAVIES

Hmm. Mr. Abbott. I suppose you been chewin' over our personal affairs with him, eh? *(This last to Whitehead.)* And I suppose he's goin' to eat with us and we're goin' to chew 'em over again, too.

MR. ABBOTT

*(Very sprightly.)* Awfully sorry, Miss Davies, but the truth is I've got a date.

MISS DAVIES

*(Who holds all writers as unnecessary evils.)* You?

MR. ABBOTT

Yes, I've got a date to take Miss O'Rourke, the Spanish dancer, out to supper. Say, there's some girl, Miss Davies, some chicken!

MISS DAVIES

*(Looks suspiciously.)* O'Rourke? You? I ain't never seen you with her. Ain't this a sudden fondness?

MR. ABBOTT

You got to get on to my system, Miss Davies, to know who I am going with. I like O'Rourke—plenty of dash. If she only didn't eat so much.

MISS DAVIES

No accountin' for tastes. But don't let us keep you, Mr. Abbott, from your guest.

MR. ABBOTT

*(Still laboring under the absurd hallucination that money is going to come from somewhere, he is slowly shoved out by Mr. Whitehead and the door closed.)*

MISS DAVIES

*(Switching her gum from one side of her carmine mouth to the other.)* This business of Abbott's on the level?

MR. WHITEHEAD

Surest thing you know. *(Very*

chirpy.) Ain't you ever seen 'em together? I have. He's nuts about her. You got it all wrong, Minnie.

MISS DAVIES

Well, he's kept mighty quiet about it.

MR. WHITEHEAD

Minnie, how would you like a nice porterhouse, planked, with mushrooms dancin' on it, and the juice all sizzling all around? And a little asparagus on the side and a couple of quarts of cold Schlitz to wash it down?

MISS DAVIES

Say, Jimmy, you *do* know how to read my mind. Don't forget potatoes *au gratin*, too. Come to think about it, I think that O'Rourke is just about right for Abbott. I don't know which one is the biggest fool.

MR. WHITEHEAD

Sure, Minnie. Forget 'em. Let's go eat. You know I'm sorry for what I said a while ago.

MISS DAVIES

(Putting her two hands on Mr. Whitehead's padded shoulders.) And ain't I ashamed, too, of the way I carried on! But I just can't help it; it's in me and it's got to come out. Even Sarah Bernhardt's that way. It's temperment.

MR. WHITEHEAD

I know, honey. I got the same thing. We're all full of it, real actors are. It's the cross we bear, temperment. Say, kid, you got the price, ain't you, for the meal? (At this, Mr. Whitehead, to encourage a favorable answer, steals a vivid kiss from his vis-à-vis.)

MISS DAVIES

Naw, Jimmy, I ain't got a bean tonight. I thought you had it. Didn't Abbott have any?

MR. WHITEHEAD

It's all right; we'll touch the stage manager. He's got some. He can't deny it. I saw him get it.

[CURTAIN]



## TO ONE WHO IS BEAUTIFUL

By David Morton

THIS is the face my yearning fancy wrought  
 From beauties half imagined and half truth;  
 This is the face my ageless spirit sought,  
 The loveliness that lured my dreaming youth.  
 In immemorial times, in lonely places,  
 Through ancient cities and by sleeping seas,  
 I sought your face beyond their changing faces,  
 Finding but hints and lures in all of these.

I was the youth who turned from Helen's brow,  
 Who found no beauty in their Beatrice;  
 Their Thais seemed less lovely—then as now,  
 Though some had bartered Athens for her kiss.—  
 Down Time's dim arras,—faint and fair and far,  
 This face has lured me, like a lonely star.



## THE IDEAL AFFAIR

By Maurice Samuel

IT must have been towards eleven o'clock that Allen gave up the struggling ghost of his hopes and breathed his last and heaviest sigh of boredom. Flanked on two sides by huge and tremulous palm leaves and cut off from frontal attack by heavy tapestry, he would, even in the turmoil and movement of the room, have dropped into salving sleep but that, every eleven and a half minutes, without fail or variation, the fat hostess lifted aside the veil and, bending down marvelously, inquired: "Have you had some punch? Did you hear the last singer? Don't you think she's just wonderful?" to which he, starting up, replied, without fail or variation: "I haven't: I didn't: I don't": She did not pause to hear what he said, but passed on with a vague smile of satisfaction dimly diffused over her features.

It was some distinct relief that the host himself gave none of the guests any trouble. He, as the roomful knew, was the chief victim of his wife's voracious social instincts. As a rule, a party of searchers organised by the hostess would find him cowering in a remote corner, as though stunned, and listening with dumb unintelligence to a conversation carried on under a mist of cigar smoke. About eleven fifteen, perceiving that the old woman singing at the piano was pulling faces at him without provocation, Allen made a dash for the far end of the room, and got his head well under the sheet of smoke before her singing had stopped.

With the primitive instinct of the hunted male, Allen had made for the spot where the smoke was thickest. Re-

covering his self-possession he took in the fact that primitive instincts are misleading in a complicated civilisation. The smoke issued from the cigars of four men and the cigarettes of a number of ladies: but now retreat was out of the question, for apparently the period of eleven and a half minutes had come to an end, and the hostess loomed up behind him, impassable. The conversation of one of the bearded smokers cropped up with a sudden allusion to a dear, absent friend of hers, and the triple question wherewith she had pursued Allen froze abruptly behind the last chin. It was the cynic of the evening who was speaking: he was the delight of the hostess, the continental touch she had discovered after three years of search, and appropriated after seven quarrels with rival aspirants.

"Gadsby, the artist," he was saying, with the slow, suave utterance becoming to his vocation, "gave up drawing for the 'Firefly' because they used to put such indelicate jokes under his pictures. Gadsby himself was the most innocent person imaginable: he could never have understood their jokes at a hundred dollars apiece. But respectable people ceased talking to him."

"Let me see," said one of the female smokers, incredulously, "Isn't Gadsby the fellow who had a wife that loved him?"

"Why, yes," said the bearded man. "It was his friend Denbigh's wife."

"Mr. Felix!" burst in the hostess, scandalised and overjoyed.

"Mr. Felix!" exclaimed the female smokers in corroboration.

"Denbigh," continued the speaker,



ignoring the tributary interjections, "was the fellow who used to get drunk out of sheer good spirits. He once justified his habits to me, trusting I would vindicate his good taste to the world at large. He said that he did it out of love for his wife, as abstinence made the heart grow fonder."

"I don't think that man Denbigh should have married his wife," said the same female smoker indignantly to the cynic.

"True," he replied, "his wife is just the last person in the world that any man should have married. But most men marry because they are not artists: because they never know when the curtain has gone down on an affair."

A group came sauntering up at this moment: the first interested listeners attracted them, and now a larger audience tempted the speaker into the didactic and oratoric.

"Men—and women, too, of course—never know when to stop. They don't understand that the dissatisfied feeling of suspended finality is the spice which will keep the memory of the affair forever green. Personally, I don't understand why a man should be so stupid as, having kissed a woman once, to want to kiss her twice: or, what's worse, having told her once that he loved her, to want to tell her so a second time. In my opinion all affairs can be excellently and rightly conducted, *ab ovum ad malum* in the course of a single evening. Right from the very beginning to the very end. And yet it's never done: never done."

He paused. The hostess quivered with secret pride. No one dared to comment.

"And even taking in human weakness there is still one way in which it can be done: one way: the only way."

He paused again.

"Ah! do tell, Mr. Felix," came the breathless chorus.

He shook his head skeptically.

"To tell it would be to spoil it. Irretrievably. So even at the risk of being dubbed a charlatan I keep it to

myself. But it may be your luck to discover it some day."

At this moment, in her eagerness, the hostess moved round Allen's chair and came nearer the speaker. Allen saw his opportunity. He slid sideways out of the chair and wriggled into the comparative freedom of the swarming room. There he put a finger into his collar and breathed with relief.

For a while he deliberated, and then concluded that there were things infinitely worse than mere passive boredom, so he wandered back his chair between the palms and settled himself comfortably. Behind him a man and woman talked gelatinous Russian. In front of his chair a fat man had taken the place of the thin old woman and played the piano with a speed and dexterity which made the perspiration run down his face.

"There is no peace for the wicked," groaned Allen, inwardly.

Five minutes passed. The hostess came and went, a vision of vast solicitude, perturbed over the punch and the music. Allen closed his eyes.

Then, out of the murmuring and the tinkling, a soft voice resolved itself suddenly at his ear.

"I feel just as bad as you. Worse, in fact."

He opened his eyes dully, and perceived a girl of perhaps twenty. Her wide, blue eyes gazed sadly into his: her face was pale; the black hair massed above it gave it a look of faintly flushed ivory.

"I don't know you," said Allen, drearily, "but I swear you don't feel as bad as I. A mere woman couldn't bear the physical reaction."

"What shall we do about it?" she asked, miserably.

He reflected. "Let's go out."

"Let's," she said.

He rose, and they wound their way to the parted curtains. At the front door an astonished servant let them out, hatless and coatless.

"This is better," said the girl, swinging her arms about wildly under a lamp. "Much better."

"Be careful. You'll hit someone in the eye," said Allen. "Are you hungry?"

"I am," she said. "Do you know of a delicatessen store around here? To-night I yearn for pastrami and pickles."

"You shall have them, if I die for it," said Allen, fervently. "This way, please."

From the side street they came out on the main road. People were infrequent, but highly curious. A cat followed them humbly at a distance.

"You know where you are going, I hope," she said.

"You are too optimistic, Constantia," said Allen.

"Not Constantia," she shook her head. "To-night it shall be Berenice."

"Good," he replied. "Berenice and—and Lysimachus."

Stores were not frequent; very few of them were lit, but at the end of ten minutes' walk they came upon a dingy store enthusiastically labeled: "Delicatessen and Lunch Room." Four hungry sausages were suspended in the window; beside them a number of green olives lay quietly in a jar.

"This will do," said Allen, decisively. "I'm damned hungry."

Inside were two tables, with four spider-legged chairs to each. They sat down at a table, and Allen scraped one of the chairs about till a swarthy fellow in shirt sleeves, carrying a small barrel, issued from a trap-door. At the sight of Allen's starched shirt and Berenice's bare arms and shoulders he dropped the barrel into the cellar again.

"Wot you want?" he cried, tremblingly, half his body visible above the trap-door.

"Pastrami, pickles and tongue," said Allen.

The matter-of-fact reply did not reassure the man at once. He gazed long and earnestly at the two of them, and made at first as if to return to the safety of his cellar. Then hesitantly he emerged upwards and slipped behind the counter.

Allen stretched out his feet and

clasped his hands behind the back of his head.

"Berenice, let's shoot the owner of this store and run off with the sausages."

The man behind the counter stiffened up, then grinned nervously and proceeded feverishly with the slicing.

"Not to-night, Lysimachus, I'm much too tired."

"Listen!" said Allen, suddenly.

"Let's take the pastrami and pickles into the park. There's no hurry."

"What park?"

"There's a park round here, Crotona Park it's called. Say, Kachadoorian! Wrap up that stuff in a strong bag. And give me a siphon of soda."

When they left the store Allen swung in one hand a siphon of soda. Under his arm he carried a bulky package which gave out an energetic smell. The same cat followed them unobtrusively.

"Here, hold this," said Allen. He gave her the bag and turned round. The cat stood still and eyed him pensively. Allen took up the siphon and pointed carefully at the cat. Then, without warning, he squirted.

The cat made a wild dart out of the way. Then she turned and fled, shedding drops of soda-water on the way.

"Aren't cats like human beings," mused Berenice. "Hey, Lysimachus, there's another cat yonder."

"Head her off, Berenice. Yaw her on the larboard."

Berenice darted across the road. Perceiving her, the cat doubled and sped for Allen. Allen stood tense, his thumb on the trigger of the bottle.

"Fire!" he shouted, and squirted.

A fan-shaped jet of soda-water burst over the cat. She reared, swerved, and headed back for Berenice. Berenice made a frantic swipe at her with the bag, but the terrified cat made a semi-circle of it, and cleared easily.

"Shame!" cried Berenice.

At this moment a gentle hand was laid on Allen's shoulder. "Excuse me, sir," said a gruff voice.

Allen straightened up and looked round at a policeman.

"Nice evening, officer," he said, mechanically.

"'Tis as ye might say," agreed the policeman, hitching his belt upwards and rising on his toes. "A very nice evening. I'll be asking ye, if ye don't mind, to give over from disturbing the animals. 'Tis outside the law."

Berenice came over. "Nice evening, officer," she said.

"Yer friend was remarking so," said the policeman, expansively. "But it's outside the law." He waved his hand vaguely at the dark patches of siphonated ground.

"You are right," said Allen, seriously. "Sir, though you would not suspect it, I believe in the freedom of all living things to function with a minimum of friction. I bow to your judgment: not because of the law you represent, but because you represent the law, because you are a policeman, because the highest artistic expression and assertion of your being lies in, as it were, your policemanising. Come."

He took the siphon in his left hand and offered his free arm to Berenice. She took it very gravely. The policeman looked after them thoughtfully as they made for the park gates.

"The summer-house," said Allen, after a few moments' walk, "stands in the middle of the park. It is situated on an eminence—"

"And," continued Berenice, "affords an excellent view of the surrounding scenery—"

"It has been much admired for its wooden carvings—" Allen took up the chorus.

"And is widely frequented by neighbouring residents," finished up Berenice.

"I didn't know you'd read the book, but you have it well," admitted Allen. "We'll have luncheon in there."

The summer-house corresponded with the description, save that neither carvings nor neighbouring residents were in evidence. These, like the emi-

nence and the scenery must have been obscured by the night.

But the wooden floor was smooth, and the benches around the half-walls comfortable.

"Here will we sit," said Allen. "Open up, if you please."

She placed the bag between them and ripped it open. Then she spread out the comestibles, a conglomeration of meats, olives and succulent pickles. "Fall to," commanded Allen.

They fell to. There was something poignantly appetising about the food compelling silence for a few minutes.

"Wilt drink?" asked Allen, at length.

"Sure," she said, plaintively, "but there's no cup."

"The cup," said Allen, meditatively, "is what is called in political economy the unproductive middleman. In a right society it would be entirely dispensed with. Open your mouth."

She leaned back and obeyed. "Careful, Lysimachus," she warned.

"Careful it is." He put the nozzle of the siphon over her open mouth and squeezed gently. The water sizzled out slowly. She closed her eyes and drank.

"Delicious," she said, when he lifted away the siphon. "There must be a vice resident in vessels which stales the relish of a drink. One should always drink from the very soda-fount."

"You have said," he agreed, and put the nozzle to his own lips.

"I prefer this to any musical-at-home," she said, dreamily. "Look, the moon follows our example, and comes out."

"We forgive them their music and their company," mused Allen. "But I shall miss some of the dancing, if not some of the dancers."

"There's no dance music here," she murmured, regretfully, "or we'd to't e'en with a waltz."

"I might whistle it," he suggested.

"No, it would take the taste from it to dance with the musician. But wait— I'll dance that which calls for no other music than that."

She pointed to the stirring trees outside the summer-house.

"Look, I have even a polished strip of mahogany for dancing."

The moonlight, shafting in between the ridge of the half-wall and the edge of the roof, lit up a silver strip of the smooth boards.

"There," said Allen. "By special request. Go to it, girl."

She rose up languidly and stood in the centre of the silver strip, fingers lightly on lips, face turned to the side. The rim of the moonlight alit half-way on her dress, leaving her shoulders and head in the shadow.

She did not start abruptly, but with a movement that he barely noticed, began to sway to left and right. The slow rhythm of her body suggested a silent and inner string music, to which the trees gave a large and murmurous wood-wind background.

Then, as slowly, she drew her hands upward and inward, her fingers touching over her bosom. Her head was drawn back now, the eyes half-closed, the parted lips taking breath in a long, invisible draught. Then, suddenly, she flung out her arms. Her body rose, almost from the ground, it seemed. She drew her head back further still, leaning it as on a sustaining wind. Thus she rested for a moment in dreamy immobility.

Then she danced.

She swam in her dancing. The air around turned into a sinuous liquid, yielding slowly to her limbs and rounding off their movement into a lingering symmetry. Her white arms and throat were dusked in shadow, her feet sandaled in light.

He, watching her, felt his own body dissolving into the shadows. Moveless, he seemed to sway with her, swim with her, with her lift his limbs through invisible waters. The solid substance of the walls and floor resolved themselves into dark, unfathomed move-

ment. A light mist crept up from the ends of the earth and enveloped them both in unsubstantial draperies. . . .

She stopped. Awhile they were both suspended in half darkness. Then there stole back on them the swaying boughs, the keen strip of silver, the walls and floor of the summer-house.

"You are beautiful, and I love you," he said, dispassionately.

"*Je le sais*," she answered, smiling.

Then followed a long silence. She stood looking out into the garden. A long time he watched her, till at last she spoke.

"Rather nice evening, isn't it?" she said.

He thought it over.

"Well, rather," he answered. "It is, for this time of the year."

"Yes, talking of the time of the year, what time of the night might it be?"

He pulled out his watch. "Fifteen minutes to one."

"We'd better go back now."

They walked back, wordlessly. She hummed a song on the way. He revolved pictures in his mind.

The same astonished servant let them in. The lights and the discordance of voices broke in on his ears. He shuddered.

At the door of the large drawing-room she stopped.

"Good-bye," she said softly. "My husband must be waiting for me."

He stopped short. "The hell?" he said, softly.

She parted the curtains, and vanished. He stood awhile pulling himself together.

"The hell!" he added, remembering.

The hostess heaved out suddenly upon him.

"Oh, Mr. Allen, have you had a cup of tea? Did you—?"

"Yes, yes, thank you very much. Have you—er—seen my wife anywhere?"





# PASTELS

By Harold Cook

## I

AH, you came and sat by me in the dusk and it was as though a lotus flower burst into bloom. The perfume of you was there in the dark and I trembled with love. Oh, beloved, you are a purple flower in a pool where the water laps your stem but never reaches your golden heart. Like the water my love flows around you but finds not your heart.

## II

At the gate of the temple I sit and listen in silence to the chanting of priests and the tinkling of little bells as the wind plays with them. How sweet is the sound of the bells and how monotonous is the drone of the priests. Oh, beloved, let us listen to the music of wind striking silver and heed not the voices. Let us worship in silence. In the clamor of the praying, it must be the silent worshipper whom the god hears. Come, beloved, let us go up to the temple on the mountain top.

## III

Far in the distance my heart paints your beauty for me. In the morning I look upon the dawn and I say, "There is my beloved." At the fall of the sun I say, "There is my beloved." As the dew falls upon my lips so fell thy kiss; like baskets of roses were thy arms to lie in; like clouds at night was your hair to look upon; like myriads of tulips was the perfume of your hair.

## IV

There is a garden which I know. There are many flower plots edged with shimmering grass and in the midst of the garden there is a great ginko tree where the birds sing the wonderful finale of dusk.

Through the day, dearest, you walk down the long paths and sit on the rim of the pool to smell the languorous sweetness of the lilies; you sit beneath the ginko tree to hear the flutes of the evening curling their threads of music through space.

The garden is my heart.



THE most successful man in society is he who has the wit not to be too wise, and the wisdom not to be too witty.



# HOW PLASH-GOO CAME TO THE LAND OF NONE'S DESIRE

By Lord Dunsany

**I**N a thatched cottage of enormous size—so vast that we might consider it a palace—but only a cottage in the style of its building, its timbers and the nature of its interior—there lived Plash-Goo.

Plash-Goo was of the children of the giants, whose sire was Uph. And the lineage of Uph had dwindled in bulk for the last five hundred years till the giants were now no more than fifteen foot high; but Uph ate elephants, which he caught with his hands.

Now on the tops of the mountains above the house of Plash-Goo, for Plash-Goo lived in the plains, there dwelt the dwarf whose name was Lrippity-Kang.

And the dwarf used to walk at evening on the edge of the tops of the mountains, and would walk up and down along it, and was squat and ugly and hairy, and was plainly seen of Plash-Goo.

And for many weeks the giant had suffered the sight of him, but at length grew irked at the sight (as men are by little things), and could not sleep of a night and lost his taste for pigs. And at last there came the day, as anyone might have known, when Plash-Goo shouldered his club and went up to look for the dwarf.

And the dwarf, though briefly squat, was broader than may be dreamed, beyond all breadth of man, and stronger than men may know: strength in its very essence dwelt in that little frame as a spark in the heart of a flint: but to Plash-Goo he was no more than misshapen, bearded and squat, a thing that

dared to defy all natural laws by being more broad than long.

When Plash-Goo came to the mountain he cast his chimahalk down (for so he named the club of his heart's desire), lest the dwarf should defy him with nimbleness; and stepped toward Lrippity-Kang with gripping hands, who stopped in his mountainous walk without a word and swung round his hideous breadth to confront Plash-Goo.

Already then Plash-Goo in the deeps of his mind had seen himself seize the dwarf in one large hand and hurl him with his beard and his hated breadth sheer down the precipice that dropped away from that very place to the Land of None's Desire. Yet it was otherwise that Fate would have it. For the dwarf parried with his little arms the grip of those monstrous hands, and gradually working along the enormous limbs came at length to the giant's body, where by dwarfish cunning he obtained a grip. And turning Plash-Goo about, as a spider does some great fly, till his little grip was suitable to his purpose, he suddenly lifted the giant over his head. Slowly at first, by the edge of that precipice whose base sheer distance hid, he swung his giant victim round his head, but soon faster and faster; and at last, when Plash-Goo was streaming round the hated breadth of the dwarf, and the no less hated beard was flapping in the wind, Lrippity-Kang let go. Plash-Goo shot over the edge and for some way farther, out toward Space, like a stone. Then he began to fall. It

was long before he believed and truly knew that this was really he that fell from this mountain, for we do not associate such dooms with ourselves. But when he had fallen for some while through the evening and saw below him where there had been nothing to see, or *began* to see, the glimmer of tiny fields, then his optimism departed; till later on when the fields were greener and larger he saw that this was in-

deed (and growing how terribly nearer) that very land to which he had destined the dwarf.

At last he saw it unmistakable, close, with its grim houses and its dreadful ways, and its green fields shining in the light of the evening. His cloak was streaming from him in whistling shreds.

So Plash-Goo came to the Land of None's Desire.



## THINGS I LOVE TO LOOK AT

By Hazel Marjorie Smith

I LOVE to look at a man who has a wee bit of an edge on . . . it rejoices me . . . when he is in evening clothes . . . and his hat is tipped rakishly on the back of his head and he is handsome . . . and his eyes are eager with the ecstasies of life . . . and love . . . and wine . . .

I love to look at street car conductors . . . they puzzle me . . . and amuse me . . . I can't understand why the droll creatures' coats are always too long for them . . .

I love to look at the setting sun . . . it saddens me . . . because I think it is weary and burnt out under its mask of fiery warmth . . . traveling day by day, aeon by aeon, over the same road . . . unceasingly . . . and never blessed with the merciful touch of death . . . oblivion . . .

A tipsy man . . . a setting sun . . . and a conductor's coat . . .  
I love to look at foolish things.



## IN THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

By Harold Hersey

THE man and the woman sat waiting, facing each other.

Having nothing better to do she managed devilishly to beguile him

By artfully crossing one leg over the other,

Exposing a stretch of stocking.

A moment later she screamed.

In answer to the question of the heroic sergeant of police she said, "He tried to flirt with me!"

The man said nothing.

# THE STRATAGEM

By Aleister Crowley

THE fellow travelers climbed down on the fiery sand of the platform. It was a junction, a junction of that kind where there is no town for miles, and where the resources of the railway and its neighborhood compare unfavorably with those of the average quarantine station. The first to descend was a man unmistakably English. He was complaining of the management even while he extracted his hand baggage from the carriage with the assistance of his companion.

"It is positively a disgrace to civilization," he was saying, "that there should be no connection at such a station as this, an important station, sir; let me tell you, the pivot—if I may use the metaphor—of the branch which serves practically the whole of Muckshire south of the Tream. And we have certainly one hour to wait, and Heaven knows it's more likely to be two, and perhaps three. And, of course, there's not as much as a bar nearer than Fatloam; and if we got there we should find no drinkable whiskey. I say, sir, the matter is a positive and actual disgrace to the railway that allows it, to the country that tolerates it, to the civilization that permits that such things should be. The same thing happened to me here last year, sir, though luckily on that occasion I had but half-an-hour to wait. But I wrote to *The Times* a strong half-column on the subject, and I'm damned if they didn't refuse to print it. Of course they daren't offend their advertisers, I might have known. I tell you, sir, this country is run by a ring, a dirty ring, a gang of Jews, Scotsmen,

Irish, Welsh—where's the good old jolly True Blue Englishman? In the cart, sir, in the cart!"

The train gave a convulsive backward jerk, and lumbered off in imitation of the solitary porter who, stationed opposite the guard's van, had witnessed without emotion the lurching forth of two trunks like rocks from a volcano, and after a moment's contemplation had, with screwed mouth, mooched along the platform to his grub, which he would find in an isolated cottage some three hundred yards away.

In strong contrast to the Englishman with his moustache a-foresting a whitish face, marked with deep red rings on neck and forehead, his impending paunchiness and his full suit of armour, was the small, active man with the pointed beard, whom fate had thrown first into the same compartment and then into the same hour of exile from all their fellows.

His eyes were astonishingly black and fierce; his beard was grizzled and his face heavily lined and obviously burnt by tropical suns; but that face also expressed intelligence, strength and resourcefulness in a degree which would have made him an ideal comrade in a forlorn hope or the defence of a deserted village. Across the back of his left hand was a thick and heavy scar. In spite of all this, he was dressed with singular neatness and correctness; which circumstance, although his English was purer than that of his companion in distress, made the latter secretly inclined to suspect him of being a Frenchman. In spite of the quietness of his dress and the



self-possession of his demeanour, the somber glitter of these black eyes, pin-points below shaggy eyebrows, inspired the large man with a certain uneasiness. Not at all a chap to quarrel with, was his thought. However, being himself a widely travelled man—Boulogne, Dieppe, Paris, Switzerland, and even Venice—he had none of that insularity of which foreigners accuse some Englishmen; and he had endeavoured to make conversation during the journey. The small man had proved a poor companion, taciturn to a fault, sparing of words where a nod would satisfy the obligations of courtesy, and seemingly fonder of his pipe than of his fellow-man. A man with a secret, thought the Englishman.

The train had jolted out of the station, and the porter had faded out of the landscape. "A deserted spot," remarked the Englishman, whose name was Bevan, "especially in such fearful heat. Really in the summer of 1911, it was hardly as bad. Do you know, I remember, once at Boulogne—" He broke off sharply, for the brown man, sticking the ferrule of his stick repeatedly in the sand, and knotting his brows, came suddenly to a decision. "What do you know of heat?" he cried, fixing Bevan with the intensity of a demon. "What do you know of desolation?" Taken aback, as well he might be, Bevan was at a loss to reply. "Stay!" cried the other. "What if I told you my story? There is no one here but ourselves." He glared menacingly at Bevan, seemed to seek to read his soul. "Are you a man to be trusted?" he barked, and broke off short.

At another time Bevan would most certainly have declined to become the confidant of a stranger; but here the solitude, the heat, not a little boredom induced by the manner of his companion, and even a certain mistrust of how he might take a refusal, combined to elicit a favorable reply.

Stately as an oak, Bevan answered, "I was born an English gentleman, and I trust that I have never done any-

thing to derogate from that estate." "I am a Justice of the Peace," he added after a momentary pause.

"I knew it!" cried the other excitedly. "The trained legal mind is that of all others which will appreciate my story. Swear, then," he went on with sudden gravity, "swear then that you will never whisper to any living soul the smallest word of what I am about to tell you! Swear by the soul of your dead mother."

"My mother is alive," returned Bevan.

"I knew it!" exclaimed his companion, a great and strange look of god-like pity illuminating his sunburned face. It was such a look as one sees upon many statues of Buddha, a look of divine, of impersonal compassion.

"Then swear by the Lord Chancellor!"

Bevan was more than ever persuaded that the stranger was a Frenchman. However, he readily gave the required promise.

"My name," said the other, "is Duguesclin. Does that tell you my story?" He asked impressively. "Does that convey anything to your mind?"

"Nothing at all."

"I knew it!" said the Frenchman. "Then I must tell you all. In my veins boils the fiery blood of the greatest of the French warriors, and my mother was the lineal descendant of the Maid of Saragossa."

Bevan was startled and showed it.

"After the siege, sir, she was honorably married to a nobleman," snapped Duguesclin. "Do you think a man of my ancestry will permit a stranger to lift the shadow of an eyebrow against the memory of my great-grandmother?"

The Englishman protested that nothing had been further from his thoughts.

"I suppose so," proceeded the Frenchman more quietly. "And the more, perhaps, that I am a convicted murderer."

Bevan was fairly alarmed.

"I am proud of it," proceeded Duguesclin. "At the age of twenty-five my blood was more fiery than it is to-

day. I married. Four years later I found my wife in the embraces of a neighbour. I slew him. I slew her. I slew our three children, for vipers breed only vipers. I slew the servants; they were accomplices of the adultery, or if not, they should at any rate not witness their master's shame. I slew the gendarmes who came to take me—servile hirelings of a republic. I set my castle on fire, determined to perish in the ruins. Unfortunately, a piece of masonry falling, struck me on the arm. My rifle dropped. The accident was seen, and I was rescued by the firemen. I determined to live. It was my duty to my ancestors to continue the family of which I was the sole direct scion. It is in search of a wife that I am travelling in England."

He paused and gazed proudly at the scenery, with the air of a Selkirk. Bevan suppressed the obvious comment on the surprising termination of the Frenchman's narrative. He only remarked: "Then you were not guillotined?"

"I was not, sir!" retorted the other passionately. "At this time capital punishment was never inflicted in France, though not officially abrogated. I may say," he added with the pride of a legislator, "that my action lent considerable strength to the agitation which led to its reintroduction."

"No, sir, I was not guillotined. I was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment in Devil's Island." He shuddered. "Can you imagine that accursed Isle? Can fancy paint one tithe of its horror? Can nightmare itself shadow that inferno, that limbo of the damned? My language is strong, sir, but no language can depict that hell. I will spare you the description. Sand, vermin, crocodiles, venomous snakes, miasma, mosquitoes, fever, filth, toil, jaundice, malaria, starvation, foul undergrowth, weedy swamps breathing out death, hideous and bloated trees of poison, themselves already poisoned by their earth, heat unendurable, insufferable, intolerable, unbearable (as the *Daily Telegraph* said at the time of the

Dreyfus case), heat continuous and stifling, no breeze but the pestilential stench of the lagoon, heat that turned the skin into a raging sea of irritation to which the very stings of the mosquitoes and centipedes came as a relief, the interminable task of the day beneath the broiling sun, the lash on every slightest infraction of the harsh prison rules, or even of the laws of politeness toward our warders, men only one degree less damned than we ourselves—all this was nothing. The only amusement of the governors of such a place is cruelty; and their own discomfort makes them more ingenious than all the inquisitors of Spain, than Arabs in their religious frenzy, than Burmans and Kachens and Shans in their Buddhist hatred of all living men, than even the Chinese in their cold lust of cruelty. The governor was a profound psychologist; no corner of the mind that he did not fashion, so as to devise a means of twisting it in torture. I remember one of us who took pleasure in keeping his spade bright—it was the regulation that spades must be kept bright, a torture in itself in such a place, where mildew grows on everything as fast almost as snow falls in happier climates. Well, sir, the governor found out that this man took pleasure in the glint of the sun on the steel, and he forbade that man to clean his spade. A trifle, indeed! What do you know of what prisoners think trifles? The man went raving mad, and for no other reason. It seemed to him that such detailed refinement of cruelty was a final proof of the innate and inherent devilishness of the universe. Insanity is the logical consequence of such a faith. No, sir, I will spare you the description."

Bevan thought that there had already been too much description, and in his complacent English way surmised that Duguesclin was exaggerating, as he was aware that Frenchmen did. But he only remarked that it must have been terrible. He would have given a good deal to have avoided the conversation altogether. It was not exactly nice to be on a lonely platform

with a self-confessed multiple murderer, who had presumably escaped only by a further and extended series of crimes.

"But you ask," pursued Duguesclin, "you ask how I escaped? That, sir, is the story I propose to tell you. My previous remarks have been but preliminary: they have no pertinence or interest, I am aware; but they were necessary, since you so kindly expressed interest in my personality, my family history—heroic (I may claim it) as is the one, and tragic (no one will deny it) as is the other."

Bevan again reflected that his interlocutor must be as bad a psychologist as the governor of Devil's Island was a good one; for he had neither expressed nor felt the smallest concern with either of these matters.

"Well, sir, to my story! Among the convicts there was one universal pleasure, a pleasure that could cease only with life or with the empire of the reason, a pleasure that the governor might (and did) indeed constrict, but could not take away. I refer to hope—the hope of escape. Yes, sir, that spark (alone of all its ancient fires) burned in this breast—and in that of my fellow convicts. And in this I did not look so much to myself as to another. I am not endowed with any great intellect," he modestly pursued, "my grandmother was pure English, a Higginbotham, one of the Warwickshire Higginbothams ('what has that to do with his stupidity?' thought Bevan), and the majority of my companions were men not only devoid of intelligence, but of education. The one pinnaled exception was the great Dodu—ha! you start?" Bevan had not done anything of the sort; he had continued to exhibit the most stolid indifference to the story.

"Yes, you are not mistaken: it was indeed the world-famous philosopher, the discoverer of Dodium, rarest of known elements, supposed only to exist in the universe to the extent of the thirty-thousand and fifth part of a milligramme, and that in the star called y

Pegasi: it was Dodu who had shattered the logical process of obversion, and reduced the quadrangle of oppositions to the condition of the British square at Abu-Klea. So much you know: but this perhaps you did not know, that, although a civilian, he was the greatest strategist of France. It was he, who in his cabinet made the dispositions of the armies of the Ardennes; and the 1890 scheme of the fortifications of Luneville was due to his genius alone. For this reason the government were loth to condemn him, though public opinion revolted bitterly against his crime. You remember that, having proved that, after the age of fifty, women were a useless burden to the State, he had demonstrated his belief by decapitating and devouring his widowed mother. It was consequently the intention of the government to connive at his escape on the voyage, and to continue to employ him under an assumed name in a flat in an entirely different quarter of Paris. However, the government fell suddenly; a rival ousted him, and his sentence was carried out with as much severity as if he had been a common criminal.

"It was to such a man, naturally, that I looked to devise a plan for our escape. But rack my brains as I would—my grandmother was a Warwickshire Higginbotham—I could devise no means of getting into touch with him. He must, however, have divined my wishes; for, one day after he had been about a month upon the island (I had been there seven months myself), he stumbled and fell as if struck by the sun at a moment when I was close to him. And as he lay upon the ground he managed to pinch my ankle three times. I caught his glance—he hinted rather than gave me the sign of recognition of the fraternity of Freemasons. Are you a Mason?"

"I am Past Provincial Deputy Grand Sword-Bearer of this province," returned Bevan. "I founded Lodge 14, 883, 'Boetic,' and Lodge 17, 212, 'Colenso,' and I am Past Grand Haggai in my Provincial Grand Chapter."

"I knew it!" exclaimed Duguesclin enthusiastically.

Bevan began to dislike this conversation exceedingly. Did this man—this criminal—know who he was? He knew he was a J. P., that his mother was alive, and now his Masonic dignities. He distrusted this Frenchman more and more. Was the story but a pretext for the demand of a loan? The stranger looked prosperous, and had a first-class ticket. More likely a black-mailer: perhaps he knew of other things—say that affair at Oxford—or the incident of the Edgware Road—or the matter of Esmé Holland. He determined to be more than ever on his guard.

"You will understand with what joy," continued Duguesclin, innocent or careless of the sinister thoughts which occupied his companion, "I received and answered this unmistakable token of friendship. That day no further opportunity of intercourse occurred, but I narrowly watched him on the morrow, and saw that he was dragging his feet in an irregular way. Ha! thought I, a drag for long, an ordinary pace for short. I imitated him eagerly, giving the Morse letter A. His alert mind grasped instantly my meaning; he altered his code (which had been of a different order), and replied with a Morse B on my own system. I answered C; he replied D. From that moment we could talk fluently and freely as if we were on the terrace of the Café de la Paix in our beloved Paris. However, conversation in such circumstances is a lengthy affair. During the whole march to our work he only managed to say, 'Escape soon—please God.' Before his crime he had been an atheist. I was indeed glad to find that punishment had brought repentance."

Bevan himself was relieved. He had carefully refrained from admitting the existence of a French Freemason; that one should have repented filled him with a sense of almost personal triumph. He began to like Duguesclin and to believe in him. His wrong

had been hideous; if his vengeance seemed excessive and even indiscriminate, was not he a Frenchman? Frenchmen do these things! And after all Frenchmen were men. Bevan felt a great glow of benevolence; he remembered not only that he was a man, but a Christian. He determined to set the stranger at his ease.

"Your story interests me intensely," said he. "I sympathise deeply with you in your wrongs and in your sufferings. I am heartily thankful that you have escaped, and I beg you to proceed with the narration of your adventures."

Duguesclin needed no such encouragement. His attitude, from that of the listless weariness with which he had descended from the train, had become animated, sparkling, fiery; he was carried away by the excitement of his passionate memories.

"On the second day Dodu was able to explain his mind. 'If we escape, it must be by stratagem,' he signalled. It was an obvious remark; but Dodu had no reason to think highly of my intelligence. 'By stratagem,' he repeated with emphasis.

"I have a plan," he continued. 'It will take twenty-three days to communicate, if we are not interrupted; between three and four months to prepare; two hours and eight minutes to execute. It is theoretically possible to escape by air, water, or by earth. But as we are watched day and night, it would be useless to try and drive a tunnel to the mainland; we have no aeroplanes or balloons, or means of making them. But if we could once reach the water's edge, which we must do in whatever direction we set out if we only keep in a straight line, and if we can find a boat unguarded, and if we can avoid arousing the alarm, then we have merely to cross the sea, and either find a land where we are unknown, or disguise ourselves and our boat and return to Devil's Island as shipwrecked mariners. The latter idea would be foolish. You will say that the Governor would know that Dodu would not be such a fool; but more, he would know



also that Dodu would not be such a fool as to try to take advantage of that circumstance; and he would be right, curse him! It implies the intensest depth of feeling to curse in the Morse code with one's feet—ah! how we hated him!

"Dodu explained that he was telling me these obvious things for several reasons: (1) to gauge my intelligence by my reception of them, (2) to make sure that if we failed it should be by my stupidity and not by his neglect to inform me of every detail, (3) because he had acquired the professional habit as another man might have the gout.

"Briefly, however, this was his plan: to elude the guards, make for the coast, capture a boat, and put to sea. Do you understand? Do you get the idea?"

Bevan replied that it seemed to him the only possible plan.

"A man like Dodu," pursued Duguesclin, "takes nothing for granted. He leaves no precaution untaken: in his plans, if chance be an element, it is an element whose value is calculated to twenty-eight places of decimals.

"But hardly had he laid down these bold outlines of his scheme, when interruption came. On the fourth day of our intercourse he signalled only 'Wait. Watch me!' again and again. In the evening he manoeuvred to get to the rear of the line of convicts, and only then dragged out 'There is a traitor, a spy. Henceforth I must find a new means of communicating the details of my plan. I have thought it all out. I shall speak in a sort of rebus, which not even you will be able to understand unless you have all the pieces—and the key. Mind you engrave upon your memory every word I say.'

"The following day: 'Do you remember the taking of the old mill by the Prussians in '70? My difficulty is that I must give you the skeleton of the puzzle, which I can't do in words. But watch the line of my spade and my heelmarks, and take a copy.'

"I did this with the utmost minuteness of accuracy and obtained this figure. At my autopsy," said Duguesclin,

dramatically, "this should be found engraved upon my heart."

He drew a notebook from his pocket and rapidly sketched the subjoined figure for the now interested Bevan.



"You will note that the figure has eight sides, and that twenty-seven crosses are disposed in groups of three, while in one corner is a much larger and thicker cross and two smaller crosses not so symmetrical. This group represents the element of chance; and you will at least gain a hint of the truth if you reflect that eight is the cube of two and twenty-seven of three."

Bevan looked intelligent.

"On the return march," continued Duguesclin, "Dodu said, 'The spy is on the watch. But count the letters in the name of Aristotle's favourite disciple.' I guessed (as he intended me to do) that he did not mean Aristotle. He wished to suggest Plato, and so Socrates; hence I counted A-L-C-I-B-I-A-D-E-S—10, and thus completely baffled the spy for that day. The following day he rapped out 'Rahu' very emphatically, meaning that the next lunar eclipse would be the proper moment for our evasion, and spent the rest of the day in small talk, so as to lull the suspicions of the spy. For three days he had no opportunity of saying anything, being in the hospital with fever. On the fourth day: 'I have discovered that spy is a damned swine of an opium-smoking lieutenant from Toulon. We have him: he doesn't know Paris. Now then: draw a line from the Gare de l'Est to the Etoile; erect an equilateral triangle on that line. Think of the name of the world-famous man who lives at the apex.' (This was a touch of super-genius, as it forced me to use the English alphabet for the basis of

the cipher, and the spy spoke no language but his own, except a little Swiss.) 'From this time I shall communicate in a cipher of the direct additive numerical order, and the key shall be his name.'

"It was only my incomparably strong constitution which enabled me to add the task of deciphering his conversation to that imposed by government. To memorize perfectly a cipher-communication of half-an-hour is no mean feat of mnemonics, especially when the deciphered message is itself couched in the obscurest symbolism. The spy must have thought his reason in danger if he succeeded in reading the hieroglyphs which were the mere pieces of the puzzle of the master-thinker. For instance, I would get this message: owhmomd-vvtxskzvqcxzllhtreirgscpxjrmsgausrg-whbdxldabe, which, when deciphered and the spy would gnash his teeth every time Dodu signalled a W!), only meant 'The peaches of 1761 are luminous in the gardens of Versailles.'

"Or again: 'Hunt: the imprisoned Pope: the Pompadour; the Stag and Cross.' 'The men of the fourth of September; their leader divided by the letters of the Victim of the Eighth of Thermidor.' 'Crillon was unfortunate that day, though braver than ever.'

"Such were the indications from which I sought to piece together our plan of escape.

"Perhaps rather by intuition than by reason, I gathered from some two hundred of such clues that the guards Bertrand, Rolland, and Monet had been bribed, and also promised advancement, and (above all) removal from the hated Island, should they connive at our escape. It seemed that the government had still use for its first strategist. The eclipse was due some ten weeks ahead, and needed neither bribe nor promise. The difficulty was to insure the presence of Bertrand as sentinel in our corridor, Rolland at the ring-fence, and Monet at the outposts. The chances against such a combination at the eclipse were infinitesimal, 99, 487, 306, 294, 236, 873, 489 to 1. It would have

been madness to trust to luck in so essential a matter. Dodu set to work to bribe the Governor himself. This was unfortunately impossible; for (a) no one could approach the Governor even by means of the intermediary of the bribed guards, (b) the offence for which he had been promoted to the governorship was of a nature unpardonable by any government. He was in reality more a prisoner than ourselves, (c) he was a man of immense wealth, assured career and known probity.

"I cannot now enter into his history, which you no doubt know in any case. I will only say that it was of such a character that these facts (of so curiously contradictory appearance—on the face of it) apply absolutely. However, the tone of confidence which thrilled in Dodu's message, 'Pluck grapes in Burgundy; press vats in Cognac: Ha!' 'The soufflé with the nuts in it is ready for us by the Seine,' and the like, showed me that his giant brain had not only grappled with the problem, but solved it to satisfaction. The plan was perfect; on the night of the eclipse those three guards would be on duty at such and such gates; Dodu would tear his clothes into strips, bind and gag Bertrand, come and release me. Together we should spring on Rolland, take his uniform and rifle, and leave him bound and gagged. We should then dash for the shore, do the same with Monet, and then, dressed in their uniforms, take the boat of an octopus-fisher, row to the harbour, and ask in the name of the Governor for the use of his steam-yacht to chase an escaped fugitive. We should then steam into the track of ships and set fire to the yacht, so as to be 'rescued' and conveyed to England, whence we could arrange with the French government for rehabilitation.

"Such was the simple yet subtle plan of Dodu. Down to the last detail was it perfected—until one fatal day.

"The spy, stricken by yellow fever, dropped suddenly dead in the fields before the noon 'Cease work' had sound-

ed. Instantly, without a moment's hesitation, Dodu strode across to me and said at the risk of the lash: 'The whole plan which I have explained to you in cipher these last four months is a blind. That spy knew all. His lips are sealed in death. I have another plan, the real plan, simpler and surer. I will tell it to you to-morrow.'

The whistle of an approaching engine interrupted this tragic episode of the adventures of Duguesclin.

"Yes," said Dodu (continued the narrator) 'I have a better plan. I have a STRATAGEM. I will tell it to you to-morrow.'

The train which was to carry the narrator and his hearer to Mudchester came round the corner.

"That morrow," glowered Duguesclin, "that morrow never came. The

same sun that slew the spy broke the great brain of Dodu. That very afternoon, a gibbering maniac, they thrust him in the padded room, never again to emerge!"

The train drew up at the platform of the little junction. He almost hissed in Bevan's face.

"It was not Dodu at all," he screamed, "it was a common criminal, an epileptic; he should never have been sent to Devil's Island at all. He had been mad for months. His messages had no sense at all: it was a cruel practical joke!"

"But how," said Bevan, getting into his carriage and looking back, "how did you escape in the end?"

"By a STRATAGEM!" replied the Irishman . . . and jumped into another compartment.



## A DELIRIUM IN INDIGO

By Robert Finlay Bush

HER nose is red and wet.  
 The lady is weeping.  
 Is, and has been, and will be  
 Weeping;  
 Weeping and blue and  
 Weeping,  
 And whining and wailing,  
 And complaining because  
 Her nose is red and wet because  
 She is weeping and blue and weeping  
 And wailing and whining and complaining.  
 And yet the lady is happy because she is  
 Blue and unhappy and weeping and wailing  
 And whining and complaining because  
 We might dare to suggest that she is happy  
 Because she is blue and complaining  
 And unhappy and weeping and wailing and whining  
 Because her nose is red  
 And wet.



# THE OUTSIDER

By John Walcott

THEY had settled themselves at table in one of the oak-paneled coops that range along two walls of the Flemish Tea-Room. This, you recall, is a resort denied to the boastful sex; the consequence being, malicious persons say, that it is but sparingly patronized—or matronized?—by the unboastful. Mrs. Allison, as she glanced about absently for a moment, thinking what she should first say to her guest, found herself half-smiling at the recollection of Robert's summary disposal of the place, with its petticoat restriction, as a "confounded hen-joint." The phrase represented Robert's humour not at its best, but in a characteristic form—its extreme of social undress. . . . That half-smile was the tribute she was continually paying to the memory of their life together. For she was not sure that, on the whole, it had not been even more absurd than sad.

There was a little restless movement from the girl across the table, and Mrs. Allison turned to her with sudden compunction:

"I beg your pardon. . . ."

The girl's look held curiosity, uneasiness, and a touch of something else: what was it?—defiance?

"No doubt you are wondering—I had to ask you to come here because—there is no longer a home for me to ask you to,—as perhaps you know."

"I—I have heard—I knew—" stammered the girl.

"Of course. There is no secret about it. I am staying a day or two at the Tuxedo. It is noisy there. I wanted very much to see you before I went,

and I thought perhaps you wouldn't mind coming here."

"Certainly not . . . but . . . you are going away, Mrs. Allison?"

"I sail Thursday—to-morrow."

"For Europe?"

"Everywhere! — Wherever, whenever, however I like—Ah! . . ." She drew a long, free breath—"That will be a new thing! I shall enjoy it immensely—for a time."

"Are you expecting to be gone long?"

"I hardly know how long—a year, perhaps. . . . Until I find myself homesick enough for New York, for the sound of plain United States, for Robert Allison and the rest of my friends."

"Robert Allison! But I thought—"

The girl caught herself up in burning confusion.

"Ah!" there was a touch of weariness in the rejoinder: "You thought because Robert and I are no longer to live in the same house, to keep up the pretense of being more than friends, we must necessarily cease to be that? I suppose that is what very many people would be sure to think—newspaper reporters, for example. . . ."

A fine line appeared for a moment between Mrs. Allison's smooth brows, to vanish almost at once in the half-smile of whimsical appreciation.

"It is hard to explain," she admitted, her eyes avoiding direct contact with the intent, almost passionately intent, gaze of her companion: . . . "Contrary to code, I suppose. I wonder if I can really make you understand it at all?"



The girl caught her breath, and her eyes widened: did Mrs. Robert Allison mean to confide in her?

"It began very long ago, you see . . . almost before you were born, I should think—" A very fleeting and impersonal glance at the young face opposite—"Twenty years ago: what a very long time that is!"

The young face remained immovable, yet tense, as if every muscle of it were an anxious ear. The speaker's voice went evenly on its way.

"I was a child of seventeen: the usual child. Everyday life meant little to me; my real experiences were dreams. . . . My father and mother were planning to send me to college. Girls' colleges were a new fad then, and as my father was what is called a self-made man (it has always been perfectly clear that my mother made him), the newest fads were coveted for his daughter. As for me, I should have much preferred to stay at home with my music and my dreams. . . . Still, I should have gone to college.

"But the summer before that was actually to happen, I visited some distant cousins in New York (we lived in a little Connecticut town you wouldn't know the name of), and there I met Robert Allison. He, too, was some sort of connection of the Sudleighs—very distant, so that he and I were some kind of cousins, I hardly know how many times removed: we never quite made it out. That was an appallingly young group, as I look back at it—of the valentining, philopeneing, I'm not sure but copenhagenizing age. Robert Allison was older, already a successful man. He was a little over thirty, thirty-one and a half, to be exact—a brilliant lawyer, with a career before him, they said. That, of course, meant little or nothing to me: what I saw in him was his charm, his accomplishments. He was never quite handsome, I am glad to say—I mean it has been a satisfaction to think that I was not swept away by merely *that*. But he had the gift of youth—has it still, don't you think?—the gift of youth

added to some of the gifts of age. He could talk to anybody about anything, and listen as if one's lips were dropping pearls instead of feeble school-girl platitudes. He had a way of coming into a roomful of bored people and making them enjoy each other, find meaning in each other: wherever he went he was really 'the life of the party.' And what things he could do, can do yet, for that matter—sing, act, paint, write! . . . It is perfectly natural that any girl's head should be turned by such a man,—isn't it? And I was only a little country girl. . . .

"I am perfectly aware that I threw myself at him—not in the least knowing what I did. The odd thing is that it occurred to him to take me—to catch me. He has always said it was my hair. I wore it parted and thrown back very much as I do now. The other girls wore what was called a 'bang.' . . ."

Her eyes dwelt lightly for a moment upon the mass of pale bronze that uprose in a single slow wave from the girl's broad forehead. "Bang" or "pompadour"—what did it matter to a face such as hers—all youth, all hope?

"I'm inclined to think it may have been, more than anything else, some fresh village accent in my adoration of him. He had been always used to adoration, you may be sure. . . . At all events, the thing happened. The college plan was given up; we were married instead, the following autumn.

"How commonplace it sounds . . . but I wonder if you have any clear conception as to what that really means: to be married—what it may mean, as well as what it ought to mean? I certainly had not. What marriage meant to me then was simply being with Robert, being Robert's, owning Robert—just he and I existing side by side, the world an amiable golden haze encircling us, and perhaps, after a long time, a baby—more Robert! It would be named Robert Allison Junior, unless it were a girl, when he would undoubtedly want to name it for me. I had thoughts of Roberta.

"But before the baby came (that was three years later) so much had happened! The golden haze had pretty well dissolved, for one thing, and the world's raw edges—and Robert's and my own—were a little startling in the white light. For it seemed that real life did not go to any such simple tune as the Robert and I melody that could be picked out with one finger on the dream-instrument of our first days together. He was perfectly kind, you understand: he has always been that. The bad moment for me came when I realized how unmistakably that was all of it, how clearly kindness was the keynote of the tune to which he fancied that our common life might be adequately set.

"You know the little wife in fiction who sets her husband's slippers to warm on the hearth, his smoking-jacket convenient on the chair-back against his home-coming? . . . What if it dawn upon her the hundredth time, that the kiss of rapture—for her—is simply the dutiful peck or, say, the appreciative dab of the male animal come home to be fed and gloried in? I tried to be that little wife. . . ."

She broke off with a slight laugh, more tenderness than mirth: the laugh we keep for innocence and youth, whether our own and lost, or another's and still in its bloom. But youth resents it: the girl winced and frowned. The lady raised a deprecating hand:

"Ah, . . . you mustn't think—I can laugh about it now, but it was serious enough then. Serious? It was desperately sad—having him so friendly, you know: I wanted him to rave about me—yes—or at me. Now and then I tried to make him understand, but it was quite useless: he would simply throw back his head and peer at me through his glasses—look me over with mild curiosity—and go on with his egg or his newspaper, his sketch or his accompaniment, as the case might be. And very likely he would be looking up at me in a few minutes as if nothing had happened, and asking me to go somewhere with him—to see some new

picture or hear some new play. I would be no better off, and no worse, for my pains."

"I think what I should have rather liked would have been to fade visibly without a moan, and to have him come home some night and—look upon his work! . . . So far it might have been all silliness, mightn't it?"

The girl made a half-involuntary gesture of assent. She had not once taken her eyes from the speaker's face. Her own face spoke in every line and tint of its young loveliness—commiserated, accused, besought. Only there was no response in it to the quiet humour of the other; and it was for this response that the other's glance now and then inquired.

"Yes, it was silliness of course, very much of it—but not quite all. I had read novels, and heard plays, I was quite familiar with the honeymoon tradition; and for some time I told myself that what troubled me was the natural falling-off from this blissful but (for men, at least) abnormal state of grace. But it was just not that: as I presently came to see. Our actual honeymoon, those first months of our married life, had only been different because I had made them so—fancied them so. There had been no falling-off at all, except in my knack of seeing what was not.

"By degrees I succeeded in putting away most of the silliness, most of the childish fancies; some good hopes remained, which I cannot think even now were altogether silly; hopes of being first in his heart and in his counsel. . . . I can see him now coming in with that cordially impersonal smile—you know, as if one were a new audience, and he felt bound to impress one favorably. . . . It is very flattering, for the first few times. . . ."

The speaker went on musingly:

"The real trouble was jealousy.—Oh, no, I don't mean that—!"

The girl had looked up sharply.

"There was no person: there was never any person at all. It was his interests—his enthusiasms. He had

kept them all, and there was no least way in which I affected them. He did not plead, or sing, or sketch, or act, or write, at all the better or the worse for me. It seemed to me that what I felt for him, what I was to him, ought to inspire him—that at least I ought to be influencing him in some sort of fashion. In fact, he was precisely as much absorbed in the play or the song or the decorative scheme of the moment as if I had never existed—and absorbed in precisely the same way. And he was never absorbed in me: Yes, it is true—I was not even one of his enthusiasms.

"If he had not had these enthusiasms, or, I believe, if he had any one of them greatly, supremely, the woman he had given his name to might have felt differently. One might adjust oneself to a stupid man—or a very great one. But Robert Allison is neither a stock nor a genius. He is very clever, very keen about his cleverness—that is all.

"It was the coming of the baby that made me quite sure. I very much wanted that baby, not only for its own sake, but because I somehow counted on it to set everything right between Robert and me—if indeed anything was wrong, which I wasn't even yet quite sure of. What I mean is. . . . I thought it would fill up any chinks, mend any strain. The baby would put us on firm ground—at all events, after he came we should know where we stood.

"So it came out—and yet all disappointingly. Robert was not pleased, as I had hoped he would be, when I told him what was going to happen. He was disconcerted, irritated. I could see that my happiness in it seemed unreasonable to him. He was everything but glad, or really sympathetic. He finally affected to take it as a rather amusing bit of news: quite as if it had to do with somebody else: It does not seem amusing to me even now. After all, there is something to be gone through with: One can hardly make it anything but a serious matter—if one is a

woman. I was rather unwell for a while, and when I grew better I found I was not to do anything—go about at all. Robert disapproved. He was remotely kind about everything, as always. There were flowers and sweets and what not on regular days: only I knew he had ordered them at the outset in two or three of his curt notes, and dismissed the matter from his mind. He was very much occupied, those months, not only with his law: it seemed to me that he painted more, sang more (at other people's houses), was more at his club. I was pretty lonely. Of course there were my mother and sisters hovering about me; but I was lonely.

"Then the boy came, and I forgot all about Robert for a time. I suppose that would have been impossible for me if matters had been—as they might have been between us, before that. But I did. I was very busy and happy without him. 'A boy!—Well, he's a whacker!' was his first comment; and for a year or so after that I seem to remember him chiefly as coming in now and then, poking his long finger into my son's cheek, and—'He is a whacker!' Then he would brush my forehead with his moustache, and turn away as if that settled the matter. And it did, in a way. What I felt for him at that time was not anger, but a little contempt and—not a little pity. He was an outsider. . . . From the first he tried to get me to leave more to the nurses. He wanted me to go out more, to 'spruce up,' to be a pretty girl again, to be the amiable hostess his friends had liked. But I could not: you see I was still very young. I clung to the boy: there at least, I felt was a true relationship—all and more than I had dreamed.

"Am I boring you with all this? Don't think it is the beginning of a long story: it is very nearly the end. . . .

"The boy was not named Robert Allison, Junior, but he might very well have been. He was not more than three years old when I had to acknowl-

edge to myself that he was precisely like his father: he, too, was an outsider! However, he was little, and he would need me for a time. . . . Now, you see, that time is up. When his father sent him off to Groton a few months ago, I realized that I should never see very much of him again. I was off duty."

"But surely—!" cried the girl, and stopped.

"Yes, I am very fond of him: he is, I say, precisely like his father—clever, attractive, kind, with a talent for making friends. His father and mother are among his friends; so will his wife be, if he ever has one, and his children, when they are old enough. If I were a schoolgirl, I should probably fall in love with him: just as, at my age, I should be quite capable of falling in love with his father, if I had not done it already, and 'learned better!' . . . Robert Allison is by far the most interesting man I have ever met."

"Yet—you are leaving him!"

"I am leaving his house: the house of a good man who ought never to have had a wife or a child. He was complete in his way without them. He will be perfectly content. He has his clubs, his music, and the rest; and he is welcome in many houses in his natural capacity—the most nearly domestic rôle he is capable of—that of an amiable and privileged outsider."

"Just now I shall be glad to get away from him altogether for a time . . . to forget—some things. But we are very good friends, and we shall meet often, no doubt,—after a time."

The even voice paused. Mrs. Allison musingly sipped her black coffee: the girl's remained untouched. Suddenly she leaned forward, her hands clasped, her eyes bent in fierce inquiry upon the older woman:

"Why have you told me this?"

"Ah!" Mrs. Allison set down her cup. Under her quiet eyes the girl's look faltered; but it did not give in.

"When you became Robert's secretary he told me about you—not long after, I fancy. He was so much pleased

with you: you were so clever, and—so pretty."

The girl flushed quickly—painfully.

"Pretty women have always given him a great deal of pleasure, you see. One reason why he has always—quite liked to have me about is because he has thought me—yes, I know he still thinks me—that."

"You are beautiful!" cried the girl. There was no doubt at that moment of her admiration for the wife (she was still the wife) of Robert Allison. The lady's slight gesture acknowledged the compliment—with smiling dissent:

"No. I might have been—who knows? Perhaps I even—was, for a year or two. . . ." The quick lift of brow and shoulder suggested that her beauty, whatever it might have been, had now been discarded this long time, as an unprofitable asset.

"He showed me the sketches he had made of you, and I was charmed with them. I wanted very much to see you, and you pleased me immensely by coming to me so readily that first time. Do you remember?—just the four of us at dinner and the music and the talk after? Poor Frank Stedman!—he tried very hard to amuse you. I had asked him because I thought you might particularly like him—"

"But I did—that is, I—" The girl recurved to a babyish stammer.

"Perhaps you would have liked him—"

Mrs. Allison looked the girl straight in the eyes, with perfect kindness, perfect comprehension:

"Very likely you might have . . . if you had happened to notice him!"

"Mrs. Allison! Tell me what you mean? Was I so rude?"

"Ah, no!" There was no accusation in her fingers as they softly enclosed the hand that had fallen upon the table, appealing and near.

"It wasn't your fault, poor child. How could you be rude? How could you be anything but an eye and an ear and a heart for Robert Allison?"



"Oh!" breathed the girl, and again "Oh!"

Her face flamed, but she did not stir. Her eyes, full of tears, fixed themselves, as if fascinated, upon Robert Allison's wife.

"Yes," went on the other, calmly as your surgeon must if the knife is to bring healing after pain. "I know. I knew in the first five minutes—seeing you together—what had happened, how it had come about. Please believe that I am not accusing you of anything, that I see no crime or wrong in your loving Robert Allison. I only want you to realize how very unfortunate, how very hopeless it is. And you must please believe that I am not jealous—not in the very least degree that. I once loved Robert Allison—the Robert Allison who might have been. I still wear the name of the Robert Allison who is, and like him, and call him my friend. But if I thought the Robert Allison who is could make you or any other woman happy—really happy—I should not stand a moment in the way. Do you believe that?"

"No!"

The girl snatched away her hand. Her voice rang through the now nearly empty room, and the head-waitress looked up with professional disapproval. But the two remaining patrons were evidently ladies, and friends—fit patrons for the Flemish. The younger was perhaps a little animated.

... Mrs. Allison, her eyes upon the girl, allowed the pause to lengthen and still to lengthen. When at last she turned away and arose, there was languor in the movement and in her voice.

"I am sorry. Shall we go? Thank you very much for coming. Perhaps when I come back—if I ever happen to come back—"

But the girl had suddenly melted: her hands implored.

"Yes . . . yes! I can't believe you, but I do think you mean to be kind. Please don't go. I—"

"Is it—do you think it is worth while?"

Mrs. Allison had slipped into her

former place; but her languor remained. She was like a spent runner who finds himself rather indifferent at the end of the race as to its outcome: the thing is to rest. Her humour suddenly took cognizance of the mood.

"Do you know, I am not sure that I care after all whether you believe me or not! I am afraid the main point was to have it over—to wash my hands—"

"Of what, Mrs. Allison?"

"Oh . . . of responsibility—for you. I could not quite bring myself to go away. . . ."

She sighed, and shook her head gently. Of what use to go into it all again with this obstinate young person?

"I wonder if you imagine me a kind of—old woman—who makes a practice of unbosoming herself to—pleasant acquaintances? No? Well, then. . . . I couldn't quite bring myself to go away to-morrow, to leave you the dead-in-love secretary of Robert Allison,—the quite innocently dead-in-love secretary of that good man,—without giving you such word of warning as my experience of him seemed to warrant—to enjoin. And what is the upshot of that feeble word? Not, I assure you again, that it is wicked of you to dream dreams about the man whose name, by an error of twenty years' standing, I chance to hear, but—that it is sheer hopeless calamity. . . . Robert Allison's heart—how shall I tell you?—It is a comely field. It puts forth year by year its green shoots of friendship, of enthusiasm, its little graceful flowers of talent; but there is no rose of passion, of tenderness, of self-forgetfulness for any woman's sake, within its pleasant boundaries!—And this, I see, you cannot believe."

"No, I cannot," said the girl frankly. All the enmity was gone from her look, and all the embarrassment. Her confession matched the simplicity, the generosity of the other's. Mrs. Allison rose again, this time with a gesture of regretful finality.

"I like you so much," she said: "It is no great satisfaction, after all, to have—washed one's hands!"

It was some eight months later, in Rome, that Mrs. Allison found among her letters one addressed in her husband's rapid, graceful hand. She opened it with a faint smile of anticipation. His letters were always entertaining—like himself, cool, brilliant, full of his latest interests and his latest experiments in friendship. This was more amusing than common. Her smile deepened as she turned the close-written sheets, and she had just laughed outright at one of his witty phrases, when a sentence caught her eyes which broke the mood of cheerful detachment in which Robert Allison's letters must be read to be enjoyed. . . .

"By the way, little Miss French left me a month ago—you remember her, don't you? It's a confounded nuisance. I'm having the dickens's own job finding anybody decent to take her place. She could do twice the work most of these so-called secretaries can—and do it better. Pretty girl, too—rather nice to have about. And the thing that riled me was that she wouldn't say why—didn't even have another job in sight, as far as I could find out. Just now I'm trying an old maid with ringlets—at least, she's the ringlety sort. Gives me the fidgets."

"Well, — about Tom Walton's play. . . ."

The letter went on with its chat. Mrs. Allison let it fall to her lap and sat for some moments gazing out from her balcony, the little frown of thought between her brows. She took it up again presently—to run through it inattentively enough. "It's about time you looked in on us over here," he ended. "I've a lot of things to show you."

Then a postscript; the reader drew a swift breath:

"Oh, little Miss French—she wanted to be remembered to you, when she went. I'd forgotten you knew her so well.—'And please tell Mrs. Allison I know now every word she said was true.'—Well, there you are—that's what she said. Now what's *that* all about, I wonder?"

Mrs. Allison mused long over that postscript. If in course of her musing the question, "How did she find it out?" occurred to her, it received, on the whole, the slightest possible consideration. Enough that the girl *had* found it out—was "all right." As for the man, he was always that—appallingly that!

But it was pleasant to think that she would probably see him again in another month: he would have new sketches and songs: and there would be much good talk.



## DREAMS

By Sara Teasdale

I GAVE my life to another lover,  
I gave my love, and all, and all,—  
But over a dream the past will hover,  
Out of a dream the past will call.

I tear myself from sleep with a shiver,  
But on my mouth a kiss is hot,  
And by my bed the ghostly giver  
Is waiting, though I see him not.

## A NOCTURNE

By Marion App

WE were a reminiscent group around a fire, bachelors all except myself. Wadleigh's dinner had been excellent and his cigars were Coronas. A sentimental gap alone craved filling and the lazy talk drifted inevitably around to girls and engagements. I suppose that Mary would have called Wadleigh and Topham despicable flirts. They really are a good sort of fellows, if a bit simple and impetuous. They have the defects of their qualities, as the French say.

It gave Pennington and me a sense of easy mellowed perspective to hear them tell of the times they'd been engaged. Once it was just for over night; Toppie was very young and her parents had objected. Once the girl had literally been thrown into Wadleigh's arms in a railroad wreck in Arizona. They sat on a pile of ties while the traincrew mended the track, but she had given her word already so they broke the engagement at the next station some three hundred miles beyond. Several times it had been a case of a man and a girl—and the moonlight.

I was about clearing my throat to describe a summer night on Lake Louise when Pennington spoke from the depths of his chair.

Penny was a dryasdust sort of chap.

"Somebody took *me* once—" he drawled, "—in the moonlight."

Toppie scoffed lightly.

"I met her at a houseparty on Long Island," went on Penny with dry concentration.

It was difficult for us to think of Penny in the role of a gay week-ender. We wondered what sort of a house party it had been. And then Penny surprised our guilty thoughts by roaring:

"Oh, she wasn't the kind you think! She couldn't be touched for brains or looks either."

Toppie who didn't like the two mixed, groaned feebly.

"In fact," Penny resumed his drawl. "I couldn't understand her at first. I don't think I've any prepossessions about women, and besides, I had met beauties who were blue-stockings before. But *she* was so consummately good-looking—and so confoundedly intelligent. She had me running most of the time. She honestly didn't know that she carried a double-barreled gun, and it was the talk she cared about, not her looks. I felt a good deal better after that."

It was a point subtly made but we got it.

"Well, we talked together a great deal—about all sorts of things. Real things, you know. I told her about my ambitions and plans. She certainly could follow. She was remarkably intelligent."

Penny paused reflectively.

"One night, when I was leaving the house, we came out on the steps and into the moonlight. I was about to say good-night but the loveliness of that silent silver landscape struck me dumb and we just stood and took it in. Then she turned to me and said:

"Do you know, I've never been kissed—and I've always wondered what it was like. Would you mind—kissing me?"

Pennington stared at the end of his cigar. We waited a tactful number of seconds, then Topham blurted:

"Well, what happened? You aren't stopping *there*!"

"O—," he said, "—she liked it."

## FALL FLY-HUNTING

By Maurice Bowman Phipps

**A** LONG about the first week in September the real bred-in-the-bone fly-hunter begins to overhaul his gear and traps and to get ready for the late fall fly-hunting, which, in the opinion of those who have made a study of this sport, is the best of all the year. Of course, flies are plentiful enough in most parts of this country from early summer on, but they are, as a rule, smaller and much less active than they become later in the year, and, while the early flies afford a certain amount of sport, it is not to be compared with that of October and November, and some tremendous bags have been recorded as late, even, as December.

I well remember one year of participating in a fly-drive, as we used to call them in those early days of the sport, during the Christmas holidays. Crude as our methods then were, we accumulated a bag of truly gigantic proportions; unsurpassed, I believe, by any fly-drive since, even those conducted with the aid of the new and expensive apparatus which has recently come in vogue. Four hundred and eighty-seven house-flies, averaging fully 0.0013 of a pennyweight apiece, twenty-eight blue-bottles, twelve green-heads and a horse-fly was the record; and, remember, we had none of the modern implements, no wire swatters, no tanglefoot, no electric fans; nothing but a folded newspaper and our youthful enthusiasm and love of the sport. We were even without special costume, just our regular every-day clothes, knee breeches, cotton shirt and gallus, and, of course, we were still barefoot, for

snow did not fall that year until sometime in January.

With the advent of window-screens, fly-hunting lost one of its most interesting features, the drive. Our method, and, I fancy, the prevailing method throughout the country at the time, though possibly unknown in the extreme South, where the climate is not conducive to such violent physical exertion, was to darken a room in which we had previously discovered the spoor and other indications that flies were plentiful. We would then open one window, allowing the sunlight to stream in; flies, unlike many other forms of game, are attracted by the light. We would next send in the beaters to arouse the flies from their lairs; this is a delicate and sometimes a dangerous undertaking, for the beaters have to work in almost total darkness. The hunters themselves, generally two, with a bearer apiece to hand them fresh newspapers whenever their weapons needed replacing, would then take their stand by the open window, protected, in a measure, by the hangings, and bring each fly as he whizzed by him toward the open.

It was practically impossible, of course, for us to distinguish the sex of each fly as it came hurtling by us, and I fear those old-time drives are partially responsible, at least, for the scarcity of the little animals nowadays. To-day the sport is better understood, and, with the recent passage and the strict enforcement of close-season laws and the absolute prohibition of killing any females at any season, the number of flies ought to increase materially

during the next few years. The law against killing females, except in self-defense, however, put an end to the fly-drives, for it was impossible, as I have said, to distinguish between buck and doe in time to make the kill or refrain, as the case might be.

Stalking is the approved method of to-day. And, really, there is a certain thrill in approaching a wary, active buck fly surrounded by his numerous wives, any one of whom may detect a careless movement and give signal, that was lacking in the old drives. Mere numbers killed is not looked upon now as good form; the size and age of each individual buck which falls to the prowess of one's eye and arm are what count.

There have been many forms of swatters put out in late years, but the one which is by far the best, because it is the only one which can be called a sporting swatter, is made of a small piece of metal screening—copper is the best for all-round work, though some of the sporting outfitters recommend silver, and even gold ones for the ultra smart set have been put out; but copper or bronze is quite good enough and does not lay one liable to a suspicion of a possible ostentation. A handle of any strong, resilient wood—hickory is quite all right, or rattan, but the latter requires a bit more care—is fastened to the metal screening, and there you are; a simple instrument but deadly. And it is a sporting instrument because it gives the fly a chance. You do not crush him as he sits upon the pantry shelf unconscious of any danger; you startle him with a quick movement of your left hand, after you have maneuvered

into position, and, as he rises, swish, you nip him, if you are keen enough, in mid-air.

Taking it all in all fly-hunting ought to be much more popular than it is. One does not have to travel thousands of miles into the wilderness and have to put up with discomforts and privations. Neither does one have to purchase an expensive equipment, many a sportsman manufactures his own, and no especial costume is demanded. A good golfing coat, one which allows a full swing, is the ideal coat, and either flannel trousers or knickers may be worn with it. Rubber-soled shoes are of prime importance, unless the feet are worn au naturel, for it is most essential that one's movements be noiseless. A shirt with collar attached, laundered soft of course, seems to be the most popular this season. A gold fly with ruby or emerald eyes for a scarf pin sets off the cravat to advantage and gives just that touch which distinguishes the gentleman from those who are not so particular, or, shall we say, fastidious.

Each season sees more and more women taking up this fascinating sport, until now they are fully as numerous as the Nimrods of the sterner sex, and many of them are as proficient as any of their brothers.

Just a word, before closing, to the beginner. Remember, in fly-hunting, as in almost everything else, it is quality, not quantity, that counts. Keep that in mind and future generations will swat the active fly as do we to-day. Forget it, and your memory may be cursed and your name reviled as that of a game hog.



THE error that every theologian makes is not in arguing that there is only one way to get to Heaven, but in assuming that there is only one Heaven to get to.





## RESERVE

By S. M. Boogher

ON both sides of the swiftly moving train, English landscape lay in the chessboard perfection of the Red Queen's domain. It was this regularity in the country's perfect orderliness that added the overwhelming straw to the American's quota of boredom: he had exhausted his resources, his magazines, and his cigarettes, and now the landscape was failing to interest him—with still a full quarter-hour before Bromley and the tea basket.

He glowered with a furtive, aggrieved expression at the sole other occupant of the carriage, wishing with the desperation of *ennui* that she would deign to notice him and perhaps talk away the weary minutes. There was something so essentially English in her homespun travelling cloak, her fresh color, and her total obliviousness to his existence! He fumed with inward chagrin that he could not achieve her facility in ignoring so obvious a companion. . . . She might be, he thought, a trained nurse or a duchess; he inclined to the latter, acknowledging, however, that her poise was quite equal to the former's demands!

And then he lost himself in the beauty of her flying fingers, as exquisitely slender as lily stamens. Her industry exercised a sort of fascination for him: scatteredly he wondered whom such voluminous folds would ultimately enwrap. Try as he might, he could never recall having seen man, woman, or child garbed in knitted robes; vaguely he cogitated the awful possibilities of there ever being enough babies-about-to-be-born to inherit the countless afghans women were forever fashioning. . . . The regularity of the shuttlelike needles

had almost wooed his slumber, when out of the drowsy silence her voice addressed him.

"Unless you look away from my work occasionally," she began, running her words together with a sound of fluttering bird-wings, "I am apt to continue dropping innumerable stitches."

The man murmured ineffectual apologies.

"This is one of the two or three advantages of my sex," she continued casually; "when men adopt the needles nervous breakdowns and suicides will be scarcer. Knitting is the only pastime that creates a vacuum in the human mind. Which is always, of course, to be desired!"

For the first time she raised her eyes to his face, laughing with inimitable music.

"You've fidgeted from Dover straight through Kent. I might call it Americanitis, but won't! And I'm sure there are many at least readable articles in those magazines you've treated so rudely!"

One amber rapier accusingly pointed out the neglected periodicals.

"Oh, come now, don't lecture me too long," the man interrupted her, "and how could I enjoy the papers when I felt your needles flying and knew your thoughts were probably as nimble. Vacuum?" It was his turn to laugh. "The evidence has contradicted your previous testimony. I'll wager you size and measure fellow-travellers, from behind those needles, for the sheer love of exercising your appraising faculties."

Her quick glance met his, and from the shock of encounter little balloons of mirth exploded in her eyes.

"It's a pastime that often tends to conceit, for so seldom do we find opportunity to verify our mistakes."

The train telescoped deafeningly into the sudden twilight of a station, and slowed to a stop with grinding creaks and groans. Their door was thrown open. "Tea basket ordered here," bawled a porter into their tiny compartment; and when the American's hand sought the region of his pocket, the boy deposited his welcome burden upon the seat beside the woman, and closed them in again.

"You'll share my tea?" the man invited her, bending to unstrap the basket. Among the cups, a sprig of lilac perfumed their little feast with spring.

"Some artist has chosen these dishes!" the woman exclaimed, and the hands her *vis-à-vis* had admired fluttered over the gay-colored china like white butterflies above a patch of flowers.

"Having taken tea together, English tea, in England, 'now that April's here,' can we ever again be quite as strangers—chance travellers though we are? To my mind there is always something so pre-arranged in chance!" The American laughed with easy intimacy at his whimsical fancy.

The woman passed him a bun.

"I think," she answered, breaking her cake, "I think at that dreadful day of Judgment, when we English are released from our graves, the first request we'll make of the master of ceremonies will be for tea." She sipped hers gratefully. "Fancy the extent of our thirst!"

Her companion dallied with the idea. "And my first request," he concluded, "mine and my countrymen's will be 'what time is it?' Can you picture us," he jeered, "a vast throng chorusing hoarsely, 'What time is it?' Or do you suppose so long a rest will possibly have induced in us some old-world poise?"

She laughed indulgently at his folly, as she repacked the gaudy tea things; then she hesitated with the spray of lilac. "Shall we share the flowers?" she queried, breaking the branch in two.

The train had stopped again, and the

American rose to put off the ark of their covenant. His tall form filled the narrow compartment door as he stood paying the attendant. The woman, too, rose and reached past him, extending a coin to the porter.

"I am paying," the man flung over his shoulder to her in an easy *camaraderie*, which struck and glanced smartly off the sudden stone of her reserve.

"I shall stand my share," she enunciated crisply, reaching tiptoe, arm extended taut in her endeavor to drop the coin into the porter's hand.

The American negotiated his payment, frustrating by some backward hitch of the elbow his companion's most determined efforts to reach the porter. . . . Then the sudden-starting train upset the man's overbalance: he lurched backward, precipitating the woman with some force upon the cushions, from where she threw him a glance that seared like fire.

"This is not the way we do things in England!" The gathering ice of her reserve hissed and sizzled in the flame of anger that consumed her for the moment before she withdrew into frigidity.

"You must pardon me," there was something not altogether of the new world in the American's grave decisiveness, "You must pardon me, but that is not the way we do things in America."

Silence simmered between them, and thickened past all hope of straining. The too-chessboard-perfection of the English landscape was changing to the urban outlying districts of London. Twilight deepened in the carriage. The motionless figure opposite the man was as far entombed in the pyramid of her reserve, and as surely lost to him conversationally as some mummy in the undiscovered depths of a sepulchre.

And then the sudden bustle of Charing Cross Station banished all thoughts except the imperative one of following and capturing the porter so adroitly endeavoring to make off with the traveller's luggage. But he did manage, in spite of London, to run down the knave

and make him surrender the desired booty into a waiting hansom.

The American paused a moment beside the cab, buttoning his overcoat, and looked at London. . . . The half-hour in the railway carriage was as obliterated for the instant from his consciousness as an unremembered dream. And just at that moment, when, placing one foot upon the step, he sprang into the cab, the fluttering bird-wings of the

English woman's voice filled his ears.

"Just one word more," she was saying a trifle breathlessly, "I want you to know you are the only man I've ever met whom I'd care to marry."

It came too unexpectedly for him to countermand his impulse to mount into the cab, and in the interval required for him to alight and make after her she had vanished from him in the maelstrom of Charing Cross.



## NOCTURNE

By Heroichiri K. Myderco

THE roads are sealed by the perfumed snow of blossoms and sandals carry the scent afar into the amorous streets. The mist devours half of an arched bridge and behind the lacy canopy of flowers the lanterns gleam like drops of blood. Some foolish song and weeping *samisen*, ghostly voices and gay laughter . . . the night begins at Yoshiwara. A blunt shaft of moon-beam glides over the water, and suddenly catches a woman leaping down from the bridge into its silver net.



## THE HEIRESS

By Jean Farquar

SHE is rich  
And of pleasing appearance.  
I have no doubt that she is fond of me,  
—She has admitted it.  
Her father would make a pleasing marriage settlement,  
And it would be an altogether desirable match.

Yet I have not proposed.  
I hope to, next summer,  
But when the weather is chilly  
She sniffles.



THE Creator denied woman a sense of humor that she might worship man instead of laughing at him.

# FROM THE DAY-BOOK OF A SENTIMENTALIST

By Owen Hatteras

## § 1

LET us not burn the universities—yet. After all, the damage they do might be even greater. . . Suppose Oxford had snared and disemboweled Shakespeare? Suppose Harvard had set its stamp upon Mark Twain?

## § 2

The unquenchable persistence of beauty! . . . Once I saw a blackamoor hanged. As he plunged through the trap and was brought up with that last, wracking, intolerable jerk, the hempen rope snapped out a deep, sonorous, exquisite CCC.

## § 3

Two cultures; even the closest, seldom mix. Whatever is worst in England is American. Whatever is worst in America is English.

## § 4

A famous man is one who survives his funeral. An immortal is one who survives his tombstone.



# ONCE UPON A TIME

By George B. Jenkins, Jr.

HE turned toward her, her face a spot of white in the soft darkness.

"Kiss me," he murmured, his voice trembling with passion.

"Why?" she inquired.

He searched his mind for a valid reason. Then he remembered something he had once read in a paper-backed novel. The humor of the situation struck him. He tried to keep the laughter out of his voice.

"Because," he said, "because you appeal to the best there is in me. Because when I am with you I am purified. Because you make me a better, nobler man."

"Jack," she lifted her lips, "that is the finest thing a man can say to a woman."

And through the balmy summer night came the voice of Billy Murray, singing on the Victrola, "I Like Mah Mashed Potatoes Fried."



## BROTHERS-IN-LAW

By James Huneker

WITH the vision of an antique marble façade lingering in his memory he slowly walked up the Avenue, only stopping at Fiftieth Street to turn and as leisurely retrace his route. Vincent Serle was in the middle of his vigorous life, but this day, an early one in April, his forces seemed arrested; like the curling wave which crests before its ultimate crumble and recoil. He attributed his mood to the weather. It was not precisely spring fever, but a general slackening of physical fibre. He felt almost immoral; he desired respite from toil; he longed for some place where his eyes would not encounter palette or print; and, a versatile man of uncertain purpose, he longed to write a novel, chiefly about himself.

The clock on the church tower told him that he was further down town than he had planned. He had mechanically spoken to passing acquaintances. He had saluted Mrs. Larce, over whose portrait he was laboring, with a vacant regard and flamboyant hat. Then he emerged from his engulfing spleen and hastily ascended Delmonico's steps. It was his day of disappointments. All the windows in the café were occupied; nothing remained except a large table in the center of the room, decidedly an unpleasant spot, with people passing and repassing. He hesitated and would have gone away when he remembered that this hour always saw a mob of hungry folk at any establishment. And Benedict, his favorite waiter, whispered to him that he would assiduously attend to monsieur's wants. The bored painter sank heavily into his chair.

The meal was not an enlivening one. Like most artists educated in Paris, Vincent never took anything save coffee and rolls before one o'clock. He was not an early riser; he deplored morning work, being lazy and indifferent; but he soon discovered that if he were to keep pace with the desperate racing of New York artistic life he dared not waste the first half of the day. Mrs. Larce, for example, insisted upon a ten o'clock sitting. At that precise hour he wished himself a writer with liberty to work at midnight; then he could indulge in more tobacco, dreams and later up-risings. In the meantime he was munching his fish without noting its flavor, a fact that Benedict witnessed with disappointed eyes.

He had retrieved coffee and cognac and was about to light a black cigar when a man hurried in, and, after gazing at the coveted window tables, sat himself opposite Serle with a short nod, though hardly looking at him. The match burned Serle's fingers and he struck a fresh one. Instinctively he stood up, searching the room for another place. The garçon asked if he desired his account. Vincent shook his head and fumingly demanded a newspaper; behind it he swallowed his brandy and puffed his cigar. The fine print melted into a blurred mass before his eyes and his hands trembled. He could feel the beating of blood at his wrists and temple. He did not peep over the paper rampart because of his discomposed features.

"Damn him!" he thought, "I wonder if he knows me yet?"

The newcomer calmly ate his ome-



lette with the air of a man intent upon some problem. He was not as tall, as dark as Serle, but older, wirier and of a type familiar to Fifth Avenue after four o'clock on fine afternoons:—a lawyer, broker, an insurance officer, but never an artist. He did not glance at his table companion until the other had folded his newspaper, and then without a beam of recognition.

"He doesn't know me," reflected Serle; "so much the better, I'll not go away. I'll watch him. It will be interesting."

He sardonically hoped that the absorbed man would choke as he swallowed his chop. Then he smiled at his vindictive temper, smiled bitterly because of his childishness—after all the fellow was not to blame; he had been a mere accomplice of a stronger, a more unprincipled will. Yet, slowly studying the face, he could not call it a foolish one. Its owner showed by his concentrated pose, the stern expression of his mask, that he was not a weakling.

"But," mused the painter, "I've seen men with jaws as if modelled in granite, eyes that imperiously reminded you that they were your master, men whose bearing recalled that of a triumphant gladiator; well, these same individuals, artists, despots, brutes, bankers, were liked whipped dogs in the presence of some women. No. Hector Marden's outward semblance is not an indication of the real man. We are all consummate actors in our daily lives, none more so than those who have much to conceal."

Hector Marden—and had he not much to conceal—the beast! Vincent's clenched fists were drumming on the table. "Come," he pondered, "I'll have to cease this baby game or I'll end by making a scene and consequently an ass of myself." He stared at Benedict just as Marden raised his finger. The waiter hurried to the table and presented his memoranda to the men. Serle frowned. He was in a nasty humor.

"What's this, Benedict?" He ten-

dered the embarrassed garçon his slip of paper.

"Pardon, a thousand times pardon, Monsieur! I made a mistake." Marden looked up smiling.

"I fear I have the bill intended for you," he said, in a conciliating tone.

"It's nothing," murmured Serle. Both men bowed. The accounts were soon settled and Benedict nervously retreated to the background. But neither one stirred. Vincent, without pausing to analyze his action, offered Marden the newspaper. It was politely refused. Possibly because of the mellowness of the moment, or the ample repose that follows luncheon, Marden was not averse from entering into conversation, one of hazy indirectness, equally suggestive and non-committal. He made a few commonplace remarks about the unseasonable heat, the deplorable twilight of New York's tower-begirt highways and soon, against the prompting of his inner spirit, Serle chimed an accord. They chatted. Benedict discreetly moved nearer. Presently Serle asked his neighbor if he would have a cigar or perhaps a liqueur.

"I don't mind," rejoined Marden. "The fact is I feel lazy this afternoon. I had expected to meet a friend here—a client of mine—but I fancy he is off somewhere wondering if New York will ever boast a decent sky line. He is an architect and enthusiastic over French Gothic." Serle's ears began to burn.

"Architecture in New York? That's a tall joke. Curiously enough, though, this very morning I was admiring the new library. It has a stunning façade. If I were Emperor of America I'd raze every building within the radius of ten blocks so as to give the building a chance. Only think of the Cathedral without a house near it!"

"You are an artist, evidently," Marden said without the faintest trace of curiosity in his voice. Serle nodded. Benedict with clasped hands hinted that the two gentlemen might prefer a window. There were empty tables upon

which the sun no longer shone, since the formidable walls across the street blocked its rays. The painter shuddered. They would surely be seen by impertinent passers-by. He sent the man away, sharply adding that he would be called when needed. As for Marden, he was languidly drifting on the current of his fancy. Was it pleasant or unpleasant? The watcher could not decide. But he had made up his mind that he would draw Marden up to the danger line, and if discovered—if discovered? He would at least tell him what he thought of the mean scoundrel who had—

"I've noticed," Marden broke in on Serle's ugly reverie, "that painters seem to have lots of time on their hands. I beg your pardon. You have quite as much reason for advancing a similar remark about a professional man. Here I am lounging as if I had no office or desk loaded with unanswered correspondence. But I assure you I don't often dissipate this way, and I take it you are of the same opinion regarding yourself." He paused.

"You spoke of painters loafing. What made you single out that particular profession? I believe it may be called a profession," Vincent laughed.

"Oh! You said you were a painter—"

"Yes, but you were not thinking of me, I'll wager. You've only seen me half an hour."

"You're right, I was not thinking of painters, or of you in general, but of a particular case that came under my personal observation."

"Yes, yes," eagerly responded Serle, as he mentally abused the lawyer for his measured, pedantic delivery. "Your story interests."

Marden glanced at the other's flaming cheeks and replied, rather abruptly:

"But you haven't heard it yet. However it's not much of a yarn. It happened—several years ago. A lady, a client, came to me for advice. She was married, married, I say, to an artist, a painter—a big good-for-nothing

fellow, who was lazy, who drank, ran after his models and spent her money." Marden was interrupted.

"Excuse me, you said the lady was rich?"

"Did I?"

"Certainly, spent her money was your last phrase."

"Oh!—Well, perhaps I shouldn't have said her money. She had no money. I meant that her husband had money and didn't spend it on her. A mere slip of the tongue."

"Good. I'm a regular cross-examiner, you see."

"True. You might prove a difficult witness in the chair. My friend—my client, informed me that her husband was so lazy that he remained in bed until one or two o'clock in the afternoon; then he would slowly dress and saunter for a walk, and often she did not see him until the next morning."

"How did he make a living?"

"Oh, I suppose he painted a portrait or two and managed to get on."

"A portrait or two? That would hardly pay household expenses—that is, unless your friend—I mean your client's husband, was a Sargent or a Boldini! Then they could have struggled along at the rate of one portrait every year!" Serle laughed so harshly that Marden looked at him, wonderingly.

"I see you are acquainted with the artistic temperament, as they call it in the newspapers," observed the lawyer.

"Not as they call it, but as it is. My dear sir, an artist is not built to put in a ton of coal every day. A man whose brain is delicately adjusted, whose whole soul is in his eyes—"

"When he sees a pretty girl?" The sly tone of Marden angered the painter.

"No, hang it! For a painter there are no pretty, no ugly girls; no pretty, no ugly landscapes; no agreeable, no disagreeable subjects. Only a surface to be transferred to canvas, to be truthfully rendered. And that's what business men, with their lack of imagina-

tion, will never understand." He spoke hotly.

"I confess I have a lack of imagination when it comes to an appreciation of the artistic temperament." Marden said this so slyly that Serle at once begged his pardon.

"After all, we are not at Delmonico's just to thrash out a stale question. Pray go on—your story interests me strangely."

"It's not very interesting—that's all I know. The woman left the man——"

"For another?" calmly interjected Vincent.

"Not at all, not at all—that is, not at the time." The lawyer fumbled his glass, his expression overcast.

"You know what strange creatures women are. I had the greatest difficulty in persuading my client to make up her mind. She suffered, yet she cared for the fellow——"

Serle impatiently asked, "But you haven't revealed what the fellow did to her—what his special crime! Didn't he give her a good home?"

"My dear sir! A good home when he turned night into day! A good home when he seldom put brush to canvas! A good home—why, I thought I told you he was too friendly with his models."

"His models! A portraitist! Do you mean his sitters? Did he flirt with them? If he did so he was a fool, for he was killing the goose that laid the—— No, I'll not be so impolite. I meant to say he would endanger his reputation." Marden drily laughed.

"That's good—reputation is good. My client informed me, and she is a serious woman, that she never met an artist who could be relied upon. And she knew, for she was one herself."

Serle's jaw dropped. "How odd. What did she do?"

"Oh, she painted a little, just enough to make pin money and to annoy her husband. You see, it was this way. She did not care to take money from a man she loathed."

"Loathed!"

"I said—loathed. She literally loathed him. She told me so."

"Why didn't she leave him sooner? Besides, a few moments ago you said he never offered her money. Now, she loathed him so she wouldn't take any——"

"Ah! That's not in my fable," tartly answered Marden. Again he turned gloomy and tapped nervously on the table.

The afternoon waned. A soft light slipped through the high curtained windows and modulated into glancing semitones over the richly decorated apartment. Several men entered—the vanguard of the five o'clock brigade of *absintheurs*. Serle became nervous. What if!— But he determined to take the chance of seeing some imbecile who might salute him by name. He leaned forward on his folded arms and asked with a show of concern:

"And what became of your charming client?"

"My charming—— Oh! Why, she married and settled down."

"At last! Is she happy?"

"How can I tell?" The responses betrayed an irritable nuance.

"I didn't mean to put the question so bluntly. The reason I ask is a simple one. I studied a case not unlike the one you narrated. It is just as sordid and commonplace. My artist, also a painter, had married a pupil whom he taught—as much as she could absorb. She hadn't much talent; it was the sort you see expressed on bonbon boxes and fans.

"She might have been all right if her admiring friends had not told her that she had more talent than her husband—really, there wasn't enough between them both to set the river on fire. However, she deviled him so defectively that he took a separate studio to get away from the sound of her voice and from their home. Like your painter, he turned day into night, but with a difference; he made illustrations for the magazines and newspapers, painted cheap portraits, demeaned himself generally to get money enough to run

the house. She enjoyed herself, flirted, went into society of some sort, a cheap compromise between Bohemia and the frayed fringe of Fifth Avenue—you may not know the variety, as you are a member of another profession. It is diverting, this society, because it is as false as the hair on the head of its women. The bohemian side largely consists of bad claret, worse music, and ghastly studio teas; its fashionable side, poverty-stricken grand ladies with tarnished reputations. I've seen it all. One of the sights of greater Gotham is this glittering set of fakirs. The woman I speak of was whirled off her feet by the cheap show. She was a fresh, pretty little girl when she came here from a small town up State. Her friends were ambitious fools, she was green—and very vain. So vain! Then her name crept into the newspapers; it's hard work keeping out of them nowadays. She was called 'The beautiful Mrs. Somebody, who painted exquisite miniatures of socially prominent ladies'; you know the style of such rot? The horror of it! Rather you don't, for you have never lived in this particular set—"

"But, I do, I do!" cried Marden. "My client told me something of it." Serle sneered.

"She didn't tell you much or you might have asked her whether there wasn't another side to her case. The girl I am talking about went the pace; and, as an old philosopher on the police force remarks: 'When a woman is heading for hell, don't try to stop her; it's a waste of time.' Her husband saw it and he did try. Her friends knew it and helped her on her merry way. The painter even sent her to Europe, and with her some of her friends to keep her company, if they couldn't keep her straight. Well—Paris is worse than poison for such women. She was soon back in New York, leaving behind her a sweet record, many unpaid bills and with a half a dozen fools, picked up God knows where, at her heels. And then he went away. It was too much. However, being a woman, she won all

the sympathy. Her story was believed, not his, and—"

"Singular coincidence. But wasn't the husband to blame a little?"

"Oh!" said Vincent. "Men are always to blame."

"Could he have forgiven her?"

"He did better, he forgot her."

"Did she go to the bad?" sympathetically inquired Marden.

"On the contrary. She married well—a professional man of some sort." He smiled with good-humored malice.

"And is she—is she—right now? I mean is she happy?"

"She will be happy always, a selfish little soul. You mean is her present husband happy?"

"Yes." Marden leaned back nonchalantly and his hands, lean-fingered, traversed the corner of the table. To Serle the air became as dense as a vapor bath. He continued, mercilessly:

"Of course he is happy—her husband. Why shouldn't he be? He doesn't know."

"Doesn't know what? Really you set me on edge," exclaimed Marden. He tried to smile, but his upper lip lifted displaying white eye teeth. Vincent lighted a fresh cigar. His arm did not tremble now. Then swallowing the last of his cold coffee, he continued:

"Her husband doesn't dream the truth of her life in New York and Paris. She is, as I said, very pretty and can pull the wool over a man's eyes. She is so interesting, so poetic, you know. She plays that little trick of the abused wife with the artistic temperament; plays it off on all the men she meets, on my friends—"

"Your friends?"

"My friends know her as a capricious vixen, masquerading as a delicate over soul. I knew her once." (Serle was cool; he had himself well in hand.) "And she always wins and still plays the game. At this moment she is probably fooling her husband, taking tea with some soft-head. She gets her wealthy male friends—"

"How does she get them? Tell

me." Marden's voice was subdued. "Does she say to her husband that she must secure orders for miniatures by dining with rich fellows? Doesn't she——"

"Really, my dear sir, I don't know everything about this clever lady's method. You seem quite taken with her story. It is, I pride myself, more exciting than your narrative of the artistic temperament." Vincent's intonations were markedly sarcastic. The older man's face was afire.

"Who the devil——"

Benedict came to the table and placatingly asked:

"Is this Mr. Marden?"

"I'm Mr. Marden. What do you want?"

"Madame, your wife, has just arrived. She is in the large salon with a gentleman, and she desires me to ask you to join her." The men arose.

"It was quite a pleasant afternoon, was it not?" In his most charming manner Serle put out his hand and took it, grudgingly, his shrewd face surly, his little eyes suspiciously fastened on the smiling countenance of his companion. Then he followed the obsequious garçon and Serle went into the street, first looking after the pair. He discerned Marden at a table on the Fifth Avenue side; with him was a fresh-colored, graceful woman, in elaborate afternoon toilette; a big, overdressed man sat beside her.

Once in a taxi Vincent Serle gave the order to cross over to Madison Avenue.

"I'll not risk passing that window," he muttered. "It was a mean trick, but it served the meddling fool right. I wonder which one of us lied the more? *And I never saw Alice look so bewitching!*"



## A SHAMEFUL LOVE

By Lawrance Carr

I LOVE bad men. How charming they are with their slick, black mustaches, their lascivious smiles and their white porcelain teeth! How fierce they look when they smoke their fragrant, black Havanas! How admirably strong they are when with cold scorn they angrily resist the amorous advances of warm, eager, rash beauties and clever vampires. How shockingly fascinating their suppressed oaths sound from the darkness! With what considerate tenderness they place a soft pillow under the charming head of the swooned wife, whose husband has just been shot! It is heart-breaking to see them reverently bare their heads in the presence of crippled Elsie's casket. It is tear-wringing to see them surreptitiously give a quarter—their last one—to the weeping little cripple on the corner. They specialize in taking the stolen wealth from cruel, tight-wad plutocrats who kick washerwomen out of their tenement buildings when the rent isn't paid in advance. I'm crazy about the bad men.



WIFE: one who is sorry she did it, but would undoubtedly do it again.



## THE ULTIMATE INSULT

By Harold de Polo

SHE met him with that flushed smile and restless hand that was calculated to make a chap feel that he was really quite a devil of a fellow with the sex—and the way she accepted his violets was a sheer masterpiece of artistry. Still, those who knew her expected it of Eva Downing. There aren't many more finished performers.

"It is sweet of you," she enthused—"awfully sweet!"

Templeton laughed that boyish, slightly embarrassed laugh that was meant to say that it was nothing at all and that it was an honor to be allowed the privilege.

"It was sweet," she persisted, flashing him a coy and—yes, almost a tender look, as she led him into the cosy little room. "And violets! How did you discover that they were my favorite flowers?"

"Oh, I—I just thought they'd sort of—you know, sort of go well with you. They seem to be your kind, if you know what I mean?" he replied haltingly, a flush on his cheeks.

"Most men are such idiots about things like that," she fluffed on, deftly and gracefully and very alluringly setting them in a vase. "They never think of color or perfume or design and how it will go with the woman! Really, you'd be surprised how few of them take everything into consideration—and women *so* appreciate those things, you know," she finished softly.

"Yes, I suppose they do," said Templeton.

"But here, *do* sit down and tell me about all the things you've done and heard since I saw you. Dear me, it's fully over a week, isn't it, since we

met at the Van Handens'? Yes, of course it is. Tell me some of your club gossip; I just adore hearing club scandal!"

A bit gingerly, as if he felt rather nervous about being so close to a charming widow, the youngster seated himself beside her. He talked more or less sparingly at first, for the poor chap wasn't really much used to dropping in on lone females during the afternoon, even though he did have a large income and a large list and was a rather nice, if a bit reserved, sort. Soon, however, under Eva Downing's subtly frank remarks and diplomatic egging on, his bashfulness left him and he talked away at a fairly decent rate. Finally, too, after having finished up all the dances and parties and scandal of the set they both knew, he even went so far as to open up his heart and mouth and discourse on his favorite topic—college life and athletics. He'd never dared do it before, especially to "older women." Oh, yes; he was a good, clean, honest-minded young man, was Templeton.

That, in fact, was perhaps the chief reason why Mrs. Downing liked him—outside of his income. She was partial, to put it mildly, to very young and very unsophisticated men. It was such jolly good fun playing with them. They were much simpler than older ones to handle, and at the same time more interesting. Also, usually passably safe when the thing went fairly well along!

With Templeton, though, she seemed to be having much more trouble than with most of them. He was hard to draw from his shell of embarrassed reserve and he hadn't even made the

slightest love to her by either word or action. Still, she was sure that she'd yet be able to break down that barrier of bashfulness—and what delicious fun it would be! He *was* so simple. And things were looking better to-day—she was sure of that by his rambling and deadly dull narration of college life and college athletics.

Apparently quite unconsciously, Mrs. Downing's arm went further along the top of the settle until her fingers rested lightly—but not *too* lightly—upon his shoulder.

"Do you know," she more or less gushed, "that I've never before been able to listen to that talk about baseball and football and rowing and all such things? You seem to put it so clearly—oh, so that I *see* and *understand* it! I—really, I think I'd truly like to go to one of those games you were speaking of!"

It was old stuff and it was awfully young stuff and it almost made the finished Eva blush. Still, it was good fun and it was what she was sure was needed. So it seemed, at least, for the youngster gobbled at the bait like a glutton.

He flushed, coughed a bit, locked and unlocked his feet, and averted his head.

"I—you— . . . You're the only woman I've ever been able to talk to about it," he bravely gulped. "I—that is—most of them, if you know what I mean, don't seem to like it, don't seem to really like it! That is—they don't make me feel right and natural and—sort of at home. I—I—you're bully!"

Eva dimpled and crimsoned very prettily and very perfectly. She was good at that business, there's no denying that.

"You dear boy," she laughed softly. "Why, for that matter, no man has ever been able to interest *me* in just that sort of intimate man talk and man life—especially college life—that you've been so delightfully and interestingly talking about!"

This was almost more than he could

stand. He reddened and stammered and did some further fidgeting.

"I—you see—most girls—I've known only girls, you know—don't seem to get along right with . . . What I mean, I should say, is that I don't get along well with them. I mean I—I don't seem to make them—make them *like* me! I—"

"How ridiculous!" she exclaimed. Then, with a sudden little laugh as if she had just seen the point of the thing, "But, Heavens, I've allowed you to quiz me unmercifully! . . . That's mean!"

"No, no! Oh, Lord, no," he cried hastily. "Honestly I haven't—honestly I wasn't doing that! No, I really mean it. I—I don't seem to get along well with girls or—women! I don't seem to know what to say, or what to do, or—anything they seem to like! Honestly!"

"Sly boy," she still persisted.

But this made him feel worse than ever. "No, honestly—I mean it! I—I don't know, but I guess I'm kind of a fool about girls and women. I don't seem to know 'em," he ended simply.

Mrs. Downing didn't say whether or not she agreed—about his being a fool, of course. Instead, she politely switched him to another track.

"Still more ridiculous," she protested, with raised eyes. "Why, I've found you *very* nice and *very* amusing and *very* charming! Really, you're . . . But don't let's sit here and discuss ourselves! Tell me, what kind of a time did you have at Terry Trafford's bachelor supper? Of course you were there? Yes? Do tell me about it, then, for I love to learn about those private men's parties!"

Trafford having been a classmate—as she well knew—Templeton was of course able to launch forth about the affair and finally to get back to their lives together at college. For a time he rambled along at a ghastly pace, fully forty per cent of his words being utterly without meaning to her. Nevertheless, it was fun—awfully good fun—for he was turning out to be one of the

most interesting youngsters she'd ever known. That is, certainly the most bashful. To-day, though, he had at least made one or two advances—wild and daring ones for him, she was sure. Also he suddenly came back to it.

"But—but honestly, Mrs. Downing, I feel so much at home with you! I don't mind talking and—and I feel as if you were really interested in what I'm saying! I don't feel as if I'm boring you, or annoying you, or anything like that, you know. I—I feel so at home, is the best way I can put it!"

"I'm sure I feel awfully cosy sitting here chatting with you," she responded, her voice having just the right pitch and just the right softness.

At that, he fiercely took the reins between his teeth as he quickly turned and fully faced her.

"I—that's what I wanted to say—that's what I've been thinking of ever since I had those first few talks with you. I found you so different—so easy to talk to—so friendly—so much as if you really *liked* me! I—I'd like to see a lot of you, dear Mrs. Downing—I'd like to go around a lot with you! Ball games—lunches—tea—dinners—all over! I—I don't like young girls or—women, you know! Why, you're the only one I've ever cared for! I—I hope I'm not presuming—I hope I'm not being awfully forward; but—but what I wanted to say, what I really mean, is that I want to be with you a lot and have you really care for me as

I care for you! I—I lost my mother years ago, you know, and you're the only woman I've ever known or met who I felt could take her place!" . . .

He finished dripping, his collar literally wilted. He had at last summoned up the courage to tell this woman, whom he really hadn't seen so very much of, just how he really felt toward her. She *had* been so bully and had taken such a motherly-like interest in him. Lord—had she been offended at his forwardness? . . .

Be it said to her credit, the gasp that came to Eva Downing's lips was stopped before the youngster could notice it or the expression that flashed across her face for the barest fraction of a second.

Then, gamely and still cool, she made the expected speech of her always having felt, from the very beginning, that he was just such a boy as she would have wished to have for a son had she been lucky enough to have one. But presently, very nicely and very sorrowfully, she had to remember an engagement she had for a late tea! . . .

Only for a brief instant, as the door closed on him, did she allow her rage to show in her face:

"Heavens, but he was right—he *is* a fool with women! And to be insulted by a fool—a *young* fool— . . . Eva Downing!" . . .

Then she told the maid that in the future she was not at home to Mr. Templeton!



**A** BACHELOR is a hunter who loves the chase but does not eat the game.



**A**RTISTS in love-making are most always bunglers in fidelity.



**W**HEN the cat's away, the goldfish learn to bark.

# THE ETERNAL WOMAN

By John McClure

THE world is full of her. We cannot escape her. Whithersoever we turn, she is facing us, all places. We cannot escape her. . . .

Though a man were a will-o'-the-wisp or a warlock o' some sort, he could not escape her. She would come to him in dream.

In the flare o' the lightning, the murmur o' rain, the twinkle o' sunshine, she is with us always. . . .

Though we laugh in the face of her and mock her with long words and verses, we are wistful still. We are lonely like a harp unfingered, or the birds calling at twilight, mate to mate. Though we mock her jauntily, we are wistful. She will come to us in dream. . . .

*We are destroyed, surely!*



## KISMET

By Bliss Carman

LIGHTLY love  
And lightly part,  
Gay of lip  
And free of heart!

Deeply love,  
And deeply grieve  
For the beauty  
Love must leave!

So forever  
Man must dwell,  
Half in heaven,  
Half in hell.



TO the truly wicked man half the pleasure of sinning comes from the knowledge that that is what he is doing.

## TYPES

By Donal Hamilton Haines

MARKLEY stood at the service table, carving. He was glad of the chance. The peculiar adhesiveness of the T-bone enabled him to make a long job of it, and to listen to what Savage was saying. Markley had been a butler long enough to have acquired a discriminating taste in conversations, and he always liked to hear what Savage had to say. Moreover, he knew that the rather filling nature of the first two courses had dulled the edge of the diners' eagerness, and that an unusual slowness in carving would pass unnoticed.

"Types," Savage was saying, with the peculiar yet not disagreeably didactic manner he always used, "don't alter. A man is born one thing and continues to be that thing to the end of his days. We don't believe that, or rather we refuse to admit that we realize its truth. If we took it for granted, there'd be no such thing as unhappiness in the world."

In the mirror of the sideboard, Markley could see the reflections of the three people at the table. Hurlburt, bulky but not fat, was a little uncomfortable but rather distinguished looking in his evening clothes, his shock head of hair mussed, his broad, heavy-featured face knotted as he listened to what his guest was saying. Edith Hurlburt was not looking at her husband; she rarely did when Stephen Savage was present. She sat with her bare elbows on the table, her fair head bent, her blue eyes on Savage's lean brown face.

"But see here, Steve," Hurlburt said uneasily, "you're flying right in the face of modern contentions! What

about environment and all that?"

"Has nothing to do with it," declared Savage.

"Suppose you could have a child born twice," persisted Hurlburt, "same parents and all that, of course, but under conditions diametrically opposed—"

"Can't be done!" Savage cut in. "Vary the conditions completely and you can't help varying the parents. They couldn't produce the same sort of child."

Then, as Hurlburt sat frowning and silenced, Savage went on: "It isn't as profound as it sounds. It's just one of those things we've got to discover before we establish the real efficiency of the race. We're tumbled out into life, cut to pattern like a child's box of blocks. It isn't a pleasant thing to admit; it seems to deprive us of self-direction, which is our most precious possession.

"Some of us, consciously or not, discover this truth. We're happy. Others kick against the pricks and die wretched. A few find it out too late. Those are perhaps the grimmest tragedies of all!"

Hurlburt fingered his fork and looked at his guest.

"And I suppose you've got Edith and yourself and me all neatly labelled as to type?" he asked.

Savage shook his head.

"No," he admitted, "I haven't. But I know you're the sort that will fit the mold. I can't answer for myself, and as for Edith—well, she's a woman!"

At this point, because he could not prolong the process of carving, Markley had to serve and so lost the rest of the conversation. When he could



listen again, the whole trend of it had changed.

As always, when the meal was at an end, and Markley returned to his own part of the house, he was conscious of a feeling of discomfort, of irritation, almost of disgust. The conversation of the two maids in the kitchen (very passable looking young women, as Markley would have told his friends) seemed to have lost its flavor. Even his own position seemed altered. The change was exactly like that which occurred to the faultlessly served dishes which he placed on the table.

And to-night the change was even a sharper point in Markley's consciousness because he had reached a decision. He had reached a point in his life where a tremendous change was about to take place. Markley, the butler, had changed his last course; Markley, the man, was about to take his place in life!

The thing had been made easy for him. Had he been an instinctive criminal, it would not have been easy. But he was not a criminal; he was only very sure of what he wanted. His desires had mounted to such a point that they eclipsed his sense of right and wrong.

In the closet of Mrs. Hurlburt's room was a small case containing unset jewels. Markley knew this because he had seen the box dropped and its contents spilled. At the time, he had thought little of the occurrence, because his mind had not been made up. But once he arrived at a decision, the jewels became the first rung in the ladder of his independence.

His plans had been laid with scrupulous care. He had a good deal of spare time; he had spent it well. Knowing perfectly the schedule of the household's activities, he had been able to examine the jewels at his leisure, and even to make a rough estimate of their value. He knew exactly where he could dispose of them, and how long it would take. Eighteen hours after he had committed the theft (which was

not a theft, but merely a necessary step in Markley's mind) he would board a west-bound train. For some weeks he had carried in his pocket an advertisement clipped from an agricultural paper. Within a week of the time that Markley, the butler (who had never mattered), disappeared, Markley, the farmer would have sprung into existence, and his trail would have been well hidden!

The unexpected occurrence of Savage's presence in the house on the night before the Hurlburts were to leave for a week-end in the country had slightly changed Markley's plans. Savage always stayed late. The Hurlburts' sitting-room could not be entered safely until one o'clock in the morning, whereas he had planned to do it shortly after eleven at night.

After finishing his work, during which he was less communicative than usual, and had caused both the women in the kitchen to comment on the low state of his spirits, Markley climbed the stairs to his room. His preparations were simple. He packed his bag, put his money in a wallet, and placed in the side pocket of his coat a large number of tiny pebbles, each wrapped in a piece of tissue-paper, which were to take the place of the stolen jewels. Then he lighted his pipe, set his nickel alarm-clock on the table where he could see it without moving, and sat down to wait.

The Hurlburts and their guest went into the library, a long narrow room designed for comfort, in which an open fire burned pleasantly. Hurlburt dropped his bulky figure into a huge leather armchair, spread out luxuriously and stretched his legs toward the fire. His wife sat down on the end of the sofa, leaving its other end rather patently unoccupied. Savage walked restlessly about, looking at books, puffing nervously at a cigarette, jerking scraps of talk over his shoulder.

After an interval, Hurlburt rose, took a card-table from a closet and a deck of cards from the bookcase.

"Come on!" he called. "I've a feel-

ing it's my turn to-night! You know, Phil took all our spare change last time, Ed!"

Edith made a gesture of irritated dissent.

"Oh, shall we play?" she asked indifferently.

Hurlburt laughed.

"Where's your sporting blood?" he demanded.

Savage had already placed two chairs at the table, and was shuffling the cards. He appeared perfectly calm; only the extreme, almost uncanny suppleness of his fingers betrayed the nervous tension of the born gambler, the taker of chances. Hurlburt and his wife sat down and they began to play.

Hurlburt played with a sort of ferocity, as though he believed that luck could be bullied into attending upon him. Savage appeared detached, indifferent, but his eyes were narrowed, and they kept darting quick, hungry little glances at the scorecard, covered with the woman's neatly pencilled figures. Edith Hurlburt played with the mechanical ease of much practice, her eyes on Savage's face.

In dealing Hurlburt dropped a card to the floor. Savage stooped and picked it up. As he did so, he gave a slight involuntary exclamation.

"What's the matter?" demanded Hurlburt.

"You'd laugh at me!" Savage objected with a smile.

"Probably shall anyhow," retorted Hurlburt. "What was it?"

"Of course I'm atrociously superstitious," confessed Savage. "I said that if the first card faced to-night was a club I'd do a certain thing."

"And what card was it?"

"It was the ace."

Hurlburt sorted out the card to make sure, then grunted.

"What was it you were going to do?" he demanded.

Savage laughed without a trace of uneasiness.

"Rob your house!" he declared.

"You won't need to if this run of luck holds!" grumbled Hurlburt as he

dealt. "You'll have everything I own anyhow!"

Half an hour later the telephone rang noisily. With a muttered imprecation, Hurlburt went to answer it. He came back glowering.

"Rotten luck!" he growled. "I've got to go out, and I can't get back under two hours at the inside."

"Too bad," Savage said, pushing back his chair, "you'll have to quit a loser."

Hurlburt looked at his watch.

"See here," he said, "no reason why you should turn in early to-night, is there?"

"No."

"Then you and Ed amuse each other until I get back, and let's make a night of it. I don't want to miss my game!"

"You're an unfeeling brute!" declared Edith. "I shall look a perfect wreck to-morrow and you know it!"

"Never mind! The Brands' weekends are always a bore. What do you care how you look? Besides, you can bloom on an hour's sleep a night and you know it!"

He went out, making noisy promises of haste, and bellowed back to them from the hall not to pay any attention to the clock.

Upstairs Markley had been waiting for the sound of the closing front door. When he heard it slam behind Hurlburt, he assumed that Savage had left the house. He quietly took off his shoes, put an electric hand-torch in his pocket and turned off his light. His only subsequent movement was from time to time to flood the face of the clock with the beam from his flashlight. His mind was not on the jewels; that was a detail which was as good as finished. He was thinking about the best possible system of crop-rotation.

Savage and Mrs. Hurlburt did not leave their seats. The man lighted another cigarette and began playing Canfield. Edith spoke suddenly.

"What was it you decided to do when you picked up the ace of clubs?" she demanded.

"Do you want to know?"

"Yes!"

He laid down his cards and sat for an instant looking at her, his hands resting on the edge of the table, then he reached forward, took her by the shoulders and drew her toward him. Instantly she sprang to her feet.

"Not with the table between us!" she said breathlessly.

Savage's arms dropped to his sides. He caught his breath sharply, and stood looking at her, his eyes narrowed as they had been when he studied his cards.

"Does it mean all that to you?" he demanded, and when she nodded, he stretched out his arms. "Come, then!" he said.

There was no sound in the library but the crackling of the fire for more than an hour. It was then that Markley left his room and walked cautiously down the upper hall. The door of Mrs. Hurlburt's room stood open. Markley paused and used his flash. The door into her bedroom was closed as he had expected. He crossed to the closet. The door was locked, and the key was not there. This had not been expected, but it had been a possibility. Markley fastened the switch of his torch open, took a bunch of rough skeleton keys from his pocket and set patiently to work.

Savage sat on the couch staring at the fire over the head of Edith Hurlburt, who nestled contentedly in his arms.

"After all," he said softly, as though speaking to himself, "what else matters?" Then his tone altered, he forced the woman gently upright, and sat holding her by the arms and looking straight into her flushed face. "Well, it's done! What next? What are we going to do?"

"It doesn't matter, so long as I have you!" she answered.

"No," he said thoughtfully, "that won't do, Edith. I can't tolerate half-measures. Never could. What we're doing isn't right. We don't need to blink at that. The sin is behind us. What we've to think of is the after-

math. I hate messes. If we're to make a clean job, we've an hour that ought not to be lost."

Her eyes widened.

"You mean——?"

"I mean the thing for us to do is to bolt—now! It's perfectly feasible. We can leave to-night. There won't be any trouble—at least not that can reach us. Hurlburt will know what's happened—in fact, I think we'd best leave word. Then things will follow naturally. We'll have to wait a year or so; not far apart, of course. Can you get ready in an hour?"

"Y—e—s!"

"Very well. I'll phone Thompson, and he'll have such things as I need at the station. There's a train somewhere around one-thirty. We should be able to make that."

He stood watching her with the same intent expression. She rose unsteadily.

"I'm a little frightened, Phil!" she said with a nervous laugh, and held out her arms appealingly.

He caressed her as he might have caressed a child, then released her.

"Now hurry!" he said gently, and walked toward the telephone.

He did his telephoning in a sufficiently loud tone of voice so that his words would be audible upstairs. He gave explicit directions to Thompson, his man, but, although he took the receiver down, he kept his finger on the hook. He was not even connected with central. When he finished his mock conversation, he sat still in the slim chair waiting.

Presently there was a swish of skirts, and Edith's pale face looked down at him over the banisters.

"Phil," she begged, "you'll have to come up and help me. I'm as weak as a kitten!"

Savage climbed the stairs slowly. Edith's dressing-room was in confusion. Two suit-cases stood open on the floor. There was a litter of clothing and odds-and-ends. She stood in the midst of it, pale, tearful, helpless. Savage sat down and began talking in a quiet, level voice, advising her as to what should be taken and what should

be left behind, insisting gently on the need for haste.

On the other side of the closet door, Markley had heard everything. The forcing of the lock had taken longer than he had anticipated. Then a draft had swung the door to behind him. Realizing the possible need of speed, he had not bothered to set the door ajar. The case of jewels had been moved; he found it, but it took time. Then the substitution of the tissue-wrapped pebbles had taken more time. He had been on the point of opening the door when he heard Mrs. Hurlburt come into the room.

Markley's nerves were as near shock-proof as it is possible for nerves to be. He realized his danger, but that did not alter his purpose. The one thought in his mind was to get out of the closet with the jewels in his pocket. Happen what might, he must leave the city the next afternoon. Discovery must be prevented; methods would suggest themselves. He leaned against the wall of the closet and waited.

When he heard Savage enter the room, and had listened to the first few words of the conversation, Markley understood the situation perfectly. He was not consciously surprised or shocked; the infidelity of the woman and the baseness of the man were matters of utter indifference to him. He was interested in what they were doing solely as it affected his own plans!

If they opened the door of the closet and discovered him, the effectiveness of his present plan was ruined. Another had to be made instantly. Markley could see no possible escape except to kill both Mrs. Hurlburt and Savage and then burn the house. Strangely enough, the horrible atrocity of such a deed did not disturb him. It was the one feasible plan; further than that his brain did not go.

In the darkness he began feeling about for a weapon. To his astonishment, his groping fingers closed on the butt of a small automatic pistol. He slipped it into his pocket and waited.

There was always the chance that the door would not be opened.

Savage sat in a chair on one side of the room watching Edith as she fluttered about in a frenzy of nervous haste and indecision. He paid no attention to the things she was stuffing into the gaping suit-cases; his eyes never left her face. Suddenly she crossed the room and laid her hand on the knob of the closet door. As she did so, Markley, on the other side of the door, stood upright and drew the automatic pistol from his pocket.

"My jewels!" she said. "Shall I take them?"

"I wouldn't," answered Savage, "unless you're very fond of some of them. We shan't have to worry about money, you know."

There was a pause, during which Markley leaned against the wall, and nothing was audible, except the swishing sound of Edith Hurlburt's rapid movements. Then Savage said suddenly, almost sharply:

"Sit down, Edith!"

She dropped limply into a chair and sat staring at him, her hands clenched tightly about some trifles she had been handling, her tear-stained face the picture of wretchedness.

"Don't you see the utter impossibility of this?" Savage asked. "You can't do it. You've been realizing that ever since you came upstairs. You'd go through with it if I'd let you. But I won't. If you were to run away with me, you'd never know another happy moment as long as you lived. You wouldn't live; you'd just go endlessly through and through the hours of this night. You think you love me. Maybe you do; we won't go into that. I don't know what love means. But I assure you I wouldn't wear half so well as John Hurlburt will! Why, you haven't touched the edge of possible happiness with him yet! These first days that are all emotion and youthful passion don't count. You have to wait for the happiness that really matters. Be patient!"

"I've done this thing deliberately—

partly because I knew you thought you wanted me. I had to be brutal. I had to prove to you that you don't want what was in your mind. There was no other way except to frighten you by bringing you face to face with the cruel reality. You could no more run away from John and still be the woman you are than you could tear yourself to bits with your bare hands.

"And this isn't the end of happiness, Edith; it's more likely to be the beginning. Of course, all this is going to hurt for a little. But on the other side of the next few months, your life is waiting for you. Now don't you suppose you'd better clean up this muss before John comes?"

She did not move for a few seconds, but sat with bent head, twisting and untwisting a bit of lace between her fingers. Finally she looked up.

"Then it was all just a play—for me," she said in a low voice. "You didn't care at all!"

Savage got to his feet as though a sharp stab caused him to move in spite of himself. For an instant he went white under his tan, and his face was twisted with pain. But she happened to be looking away from him, and his voice was steady when he answered her:

"I care?" he said lightly. "Oh, we don't either of us need to think of that. That's only an incident!"

He walked across the room and stopped at the door.

"I'll wait for John," he said. "If you think you can manage it, perhaps you'd best come down after a bit. Otherwise, I'll say you got dead tired and went to bed, and I'll give John his revenge at cribbage. He always beats me at that, you know. Good-night!"

Markley had only to wait ten minutes before he heard the door of Mrs. Hurlburt's bedroom close. Then he came out of the closet and walked back into his own room.

The Hurlburts left for the Brands' week-end party the next afternoon, Savage going to the train with them. Markley had no difficulty in carrying out the details of his plan. He boarded the train exactly as he had intended with something over six thousand dollars in his thick wallet. Only once did he revert to the events of the preceding night.

"I'm sorry I sha'n't be able to hear Mr. Savage talk any more," he muttered to himself as he stared out the window of the Pullman. "He had things figured out to a 't,' that chap. I liked to listen to him!"



## APPRAISAL

By Clyde Criswell

I AM fastidious . . . .

First I look at a woman's face:

If the features delight me I look at her fingers:

If the fingers are fragile I look at her feet:

If her feet are flowers I look finally at her figure;

If she were flawless in all I could be fascinated . . . .

But I have found no faultless *fille*

Up to this writing.





## THE LAST ILLUSION

By Paul Hervey Fox

IN THE room that faced the south and on ordinary occasions allowed the sunlight to pour its soft radiance on the thick, gay rugs and the rich walls, the shades were now lowered, creating an artificial dusk. A watch clattered a little frantically at the far end of the room; it lay in the palm of a man with the stubby beard and studying eyes of a doctor. By his side a woman in the trim uniform of a nurse stood patient and silent, seeming scarcely to breathe, moving not an eyelash, wearing an air of calm expectation. The two figures, doctor and nurse, were staring down at the broad white bed on which a man lay dying.

He was breathing laboriously with a sighing sound that was anticipatory of the death-rattle. His face was as revealing as a map, lined here with little rivers of suffering and defeat, marked by ridges of indomitable endeavor and the valorous courage of the strong. It was rather tired-looking now, almost, you would have said, bored. A faint frown wrinkled the generous forehead, and the lips had assumed an ironic curve that lent to the complete expression a trace of whimsicality. One would have conjectured that the man who lay there, very weak and very haggard, was greeting death with a gentle jocularity.

Yet as he breathed so slowly, quite unconscious of the two impassive figures standing over him and that grim invisible one that was now—if the old northern fable be true—perched gibbering on the foot of the bed, he was thinking in flashes of the vital instants in the years that had been his. He was living again tumultuous nights

and days of angry toil under the searing lash of his own will, tasting anew pain and revelry and passion and bitterness, relishing once more the great gift of laughter and the exultant realization of victory torn from the broken fingers of the conquered.

He had always thought that the theory of recollection at death was an idle fancy, a myth to entertain children; but now he perceived its truth. Past his mind swept episodic pictures of his life, flitting by like the smooth course of a film.

His attention went back over the years, lighting upon many little things and infusing them with some unguessed significance. He saw himself once more on a smoky, rattling train beside his father, a train that climbed among hills swimming in soft twilight.

"See, we're going up now," his father had said; and the words, the characteristic gesture, the scene of the green woodland tinted dark with gathering shadows, the rocking motion of the car, and the rank, pungent odors of smoke that conflicted with the sweetness of the mountain airs, swept back upon his memory, jot for jot, exact, vivid, alive.

After that he thought of the cruel blunders he had made when, so buoyant and so callow, he had entered the great city; the time that he had dropped a cup of tea in a girl's lap; the remark that he had made concerning a superior, and his sick consternation when he had turned and beheld the man behind him, listening with a quiet smile to his words. He thought of the ideals that had been his, of his faith in men, his belief in women. He thought of the cynical sharpness with

which they had been shattered, the hour which ticked off the truth that no man is a hero, no woman a goddess.

Across his brain flowed the incidents of his crowded youth: the night that he had got disgracefully, ridiculously intoxicated, and the terrible loathing, the sickness, and the racked temples that came with the creeping dawn.

He thought of the first woman whom he had loved and the mad and wonderful way his heart had leapt and shuddered at the mere sight of her. He thought of the first woman who had betrayed him, played him for a fool.

A girl's head, lovely, poised with a grave grace, flashed into the picture; a woman who was intelligent and was sweet and yet was sexless; a girl who had looked up to him and idolized him; a man, tall, thin, alert, who wore the aspect of a gentleman of fortune; an actor with a listless and indolent air, an overcoat with a fur collar, and a trick of raising his eyebrows and shrugging his shoulders; a man with restless eyes and an insane glitter in his shifting pupils—faces, faces, faces, that he had glimpsed here, seen there, known intimately, passed in a crowd, beheld on a platform, observed on a steamer. Then as they faded into faintness, the familiar heads of comrades and rivals stepped before him.

He could regard them all with equal kindness now that the human contact was close to severance. He remembered the little lad whom he had chummed with as a boy, and their mutual exploits: the awful time, for instance, that he had dared his friend to take off his shoes in church and the acceptance of the dare. . . . Then came a picture of another friend, the strong, generous, gentle fellow who had protected him and tutored him and who had been dead for so many, many years. How long since he had thought of him! . . . Others, erratic, or dull, or charming, or morose, posed for a second before his inner vision, smiled perhaps, and sped past.

There succeeded a jumble of incon-

sequential recollections and recollections of consequence: a country village where he had spent an idyllic summer; his amazement at his first photograph; the night that he had strolled under the moonlight on the beach talking wildly to himself, and the ashamed grin with which he had later considered his conduct; his first cigar; three pigs grunting in a pen on a farm he had once visited; the reception where he had met the woman he married; the ordeal of the wedding, and the feeling that he had made an ass of himself; the primary little quarrel; the big, bitter one; the settling down to dull realities; the pettiness he had once displayed; the nobility of a certain sacrifice that was still his secret; his taunting memories, his flattering ones; the time he had been so witty, the time he had been so stupid; his success in the world; his disillusionment.

The film snapped off; and he was hurled into the less vivid, less real, less significant present. The fact that he was dying hardly troubled him in a personal sense; but there remained the thought of how huge a loss he would prove. His wife who had been away on a visit at this inopportune hour; the waif he had adopted and was even now sending through college; his loyal, sensitive brother and his comfortable wife—these at least would suffer. He was sorry for this; it seemed so needless, but then he could not blame them. How much had he not done for each! How much they owed him! And how they respected—liked—loved him! He knew his gentle strength, his dull kindness, would be missed horribly. He was more than a fixed habit. The three trite telegrams that had been sent would stir up, he was sure, a shocking unhappiness. And with all this he was able to consider himself without the usual prejudice of egotism, to put himself in his proper niche with a sense of being brutally just; and he was aware that he was, in many ways, indispensable to each. The phrase went on in his mind in dreary repetition . . . indispensable to

each . . . indispensable . . . until at length the brain accepted the inevitable lethargy and was still.

His eyelids fluttered like the quiver of a butterfly's wings; the glazed eyes fastened themselves almost reproachfully upon the nurse and the doctor by his bedside, but the sight swept past them to mysteries made visible. With a quick, sucking, bubbling noise, his lungs began to fill; the rattle had begun.

About the same time in a college town a hundred miles away, a young fellow threw away his cigarette as he read the brown telegram in his hand.

"Good Lord!" he said, and his face was white. For some minutes he stood there in silence; next a frown of perplexity appeared on his face. His lips formed a few words half unconsciously, and a little mutter came forth: "Wonder—what he's left me—in the will."

Eighty miles south, a genial, gray man sat with his head buried in his hands. A woman stood by, watching him compassionately. The man looked up with a drawn face.

"What a blow!" he said. "I never knew of anything quite so sudden!" He paused and after a moment went on dreamily: "I wonder who'll be at the funeral. Do you imagine Dick Rollin and his wife will. . . . I'm hanged if I want to run into that man!"

The woman nodded. "I'm afraid so, dear," she answered. "And the Hiltons, too. . . . Do you think that black silk I have had so long will be all right for me to wear? I can just see Nancy Hilton looking at it. . . ."

"Oh, you'll be all right," her husband answered. "Poor old fellow! How I wish I could have been there. . . . Oh, say, dear, you'd better send that dark suit of mine to the cleaners right away. I don't want Rollin to think I look seedy."

On a train that was rushing east two hundred miles distant, a woman, very pale, sat in a Pullman staring out of a window. She held a crumpled handkerchief in her hand. "I hope I can get there before it's all over," she thought to herself. She shook her head. Suddenly her eyes lit with some vague idea. "I could!" she murmured. "Black will be effective. I'll choose it carefully. Who knows? He might—if I tried. Did I—did I answer that last letter of his? And then there's Robert Haight . . . perhaps he. . . ." She pressed her handkerchief to her eyes. "But, oh, how sudden this came!"

Meanwhile in the room with the lowered shades, the man who had lived his life and was so acutely cognizant of the lasting sorrow his death would engender, was drawing the last rattling soughs of air in his burnt-out throat.



## WHO ENVIES GOD?

By Lars Rue

HE knows everything. His comprehension of the universe and its "modus operandi" is as thorough as the understanding of a seamstress as to the operation of her shears. Flowers, birds or landscapes for Him contain no hidden pleasures or treasures. Music no charms. Worship from manikins whose mechanism He Himself has perfected, no vain glories. He has no ache which food nor water will assuage. For Him nothing is impossible, and realizing this, joys of ambition are dead. He is too wise to be concerned about anything. It must be lonesome business being God.

# LA REVANCHE DU MORT

By Florian-Parmentier

**S**OUS le soleil implacable qui fait fondre les neiges des hautes cimes, ou engouffré dans le vent des tempêtes comme dans un fantastique manteau flottant, l'homme mystérieux de la montagne s'acharnait à suivre les sentiers escarpés qu'il connaissait tous et à descendre dans les profondeurs qu'il avait explorées une à une.

Tous les guides des monts Alps connaissaient cet homme étrange, cet éternel grimpeur qui passait son existence à faire et refaire l'ascension du Mont-Blanc. On avait fini par ne plus s'interroger sur les causes originelles de son isolement farouche, sur son âge et sur ses projets : on l'appelait simplement "le fou," et ce mot suffisait à satisfaire la curiosité des guides et des touristes, lorsqu'ils le rencontraient sur leur route. On se le désignait du doigt comme on se fût montré un joueur de cor des montagnes, quelque rare chamois surpris dans sa course effarouchée ou l'un des sites curieux des Alpes dans son cafetan fourré de brume.

Et quand les étrangers, ceux qui *ne savaient pas*, le surprenaient accroupi sur un énorme bloc de roche, solitaire, les yeux fixés sur l'infini, écoutant monter la voix du torrent qui parlois sanglote et parfois, grossi par les avalanches, rugit de fureur, ils le prenaient pour un visionnaire ou quelque fanatique des fabuleux panoramas des hauteurs.

Mais tout le monde en somme ignorait la secrète et terrible histoire de cet homme ; et nul n'eût pu deviner qu'à ces heures de farouche extase, alors qu'on se l'imaginait inconscient ou fasciné par les grands blocs de glace crépitant d'éclairs dans la lumière, nul n'eût pu

deviner qu'à ces moments-là il ne voyait plus que du sang.

Raoul Bulwer—c'était le nom de cet étonnant ascensionniste,—avait été, à vingt ans, le type accompli du "joli garçon." On ne pouvait qu'admirer, alors, son torse solide, ses grands yeux d'Arabe, sa barbe juvénile et soyeuse, et ses beaux cheveux ondulés dont la coupe indépendante faisait sourire les jaloux.

Aussi cette mâle beauté, jointe à la distinction spontanée de ses manières, lui avait-elle valu les faveurs de Mlle Irène Hudson, une jeune américaine dont la famille immensément riche était venue depuis peu s'établir en France. Raoul en était si follement épris qu'il se serait damné pour ces doux yeux si charmeurs. . . .

Les deux jeunes gens s'aimaient donc en secret d'un amour réciproque, lorsqu'une ombre fâcheuse se produisit au tableau de leur idylle, jusque là rayonnant de bonheur promis. Raoul eut un rival—un rival sans doute moins admiré, sans doute reçu avec moins de grâce ensorcelante par la petite fée, mais un rival redoutable néanmoins, car c'est à lui qu'allait la meilleure chance de triomphe : la sympathie des parents.

Certes, l'éducation américaine avait donné à Irène une indépendance de caractère qui ne lui eût point laissé tolérer le choix d'un mari contre son gré. Mais son adorateur redoutait les influences familiales, la persuasion maternelle, les insinuations et l'éloquence du père.

Car il savait que, très ambitieux, les parents d'Irène, réservaient leur fille pour quelque destinée éblouissante. Ils

n'étaient capables d'apprécier que deux qualités chez un prétendant : le renom et la fortune. Or, Marcel de Pontelz, le rival, réunissait, lui, ces glorieuses conditions.

Raoul en conçut un chagrin d'autant plus amer que le sort avait choisi, pour en faire son bourreau, l'un de ses meilleurs amis d'enfance.

Peu à peu, ce chagrin toujours refoulé dans les replis du cœur s'exaspéra et, insensiblement, dégénéra en une haine sourde, inavouée, féroce. . . .

Or, un jour que Raoul et Marcel voyageaient ensemble pour leur agrément, l'un bâillonnant sa jalousie, l'autre inconscient du tourment qu'il suscitait, l'idée leur vint de s'offrir les émotions d'une grimpe, à travers les caprices des glaciers et des gouffres, jusque sur l'une des plus hautes cimes de l'Europe. Et, sans plus de préliminaires, nos néophytes aventureux s'attaquèrent bel et bien au Mont-Blanc.

Allègrement, ils gravirent ensemble, par jeunes et solides enjambées, les pentes les plus abruptes et, sans appréhension, passèrent sur des échelles de cordes les plus formidables crevasses. Ils n'avaient pas voulu de guide et, présumant trop de leurs forces, se moquant de la prudence, ils s'étaient promis d'atteindre le but sans conseils comme sans défaillances. Pourtant nos alpinistes inexpérimentés perdirent bientôt de leur verve et, peu à peu, ils sentirent leurs jambes mollir, leurs épaules se nouer. Ils ne continuaient de marcher que par amour-propre, ni l'un ni l'autre ne voulant avouer le premier sa fatigue. Marcel surtout souffrait. Bien plus délicat que son compagnon, il sentait déjà sa tête tourner, et il trébuchait à chaque pas.

Le soir tombait. Les teintes livides du crépuscule commençaient à donner aux glaçons et aux rocs des faces de cadavres et de visages de spectres. Les deux amis côtoyaient un précipice. Une tentation noire, poignante, obsédait Raoul. . . .

Tout à coup, n'y tenant plus, sombre, halluciné, hagard, celui-ci se retourna et, d'un mouvement brusque, se débar-

raissa de son rival. Il écouta une minute le corps dégringoler et rebondir ; puis tout se perdit dans le noir.

On crut à un accident.

Mais, à partir de ce soir-là, un cuisant remords s'empara de Raoul et ne lui laissa plus de repos.

Comme si elle n'eût point voulu devenir le prix du crime, Irène, dont le lent effacement des couleurs frêles et de la gaieté effrayait depuis quelque temps sa famille, s'éteignit un jour à l'improviste, sans un adieu. Cet événement, où Raoul crut reconnaître le premier châtiment de l'homicide, acheva de frapper profondément son imagination.

Il se retira dans la montagne témoin de son crime, s'abandonna aux reproches de sa conscience, et commença son pèlerinage insensé.

Et depuis cette époque, depuis vingt ans, seul et silencieux, il gravissait ainsi les pentes mornes et dénudées, traversait les fondrières, se cramponnait aux anfractuosités froides des glaçons énormes, escaladait les séracs rocaillieux et gigantesques, jetait des ponts de cordes sur les précipices, se laissait glisser au fond des crevasses béantes et glauques.

Dans sa folie, il s'imaginait que ses pieds et ses mains laissaient des traces de sang, et quand il s'arrêtait, pensif, entre deux profondeurs d'abîmes, il lui semblait que le torrent tumultueux roulait tout ce sang-là, et, longuement, hurlait . . . hurlait vengeance !

Un soir que le reclus des Alpes passait comme un fantôme sur la blancheur lunaire d'une arête, sa lanterne clignante en tache rouge sur la ténèbre, un bloc de neige qui surplombait au-dessus de sa tête fit entendre un craquement sourd, se détacha et vint s'effondrer autour de lui.

Et aussitôt une terrifiante apparition frappa le dément. Là, devant lui, livide, immobile, enchaîné dans la glace, Marcel de Pontelz le regardait de ses yeux morts. . . .

Sans doute, lorsque vingt années auparavant il avait été précipité par son rival, une avalanche avait dû



soudainement l'envelopper et il était resté là-haut, enseveli dans un éboulis de neige qu'une pointe de rocher avait arrêté dans sa course. Le froid l'avait préservé de la pourriture. Et maintenant il réapparaissait de façon tragique aux regards troublés de folle de son assassin.

Raoul Bulwer crut mourir de terreur. Sa chair se hérissa. Il poussa des cris lamentables et se tordit les mains eu demandant grâce.

Inexorable, le revenant paraissait vouloir l'écraser sous sa malédiction muette.

Puis, tout à coup, perdant l'équilibre, il pencha et vint s'abattre sur le malheureux qui l'implorait désespérément. Alors, croyant qu'il voulait se venger, le saisir à la gorge, l'étrangler, celui-ci

le reçut à bras le corps pour la lutte suprême. Mais, dans le mouvement instinctif qu'il fit pour se défendre, le fou glissa, perdit pied, et tous deux, le cadavre et le meurtrier, roulèrent enlacés jusqu'au fond des précipices.

La nuit était venue. Des reflets de lune d'une pâleur plombée se jouaient parmi les structures de glace et l'éventrement des roches. Des aiguilles, des colonnes et comme des croix de marbre se découpaient dans l'ombre intense. Tout cela donnait à cette solitude l'aspect grandiose d'un temple de la mort. Et, sous les voûtes du silence, les gargouillements des abîmes produisaient un bruit semblable au son grave et poignant de l'orgue mugissant le *Dies iræ*.



## OMPHALE

By Willard Wattles

I CAN make them delicate, fragile, and ethereal,  
Little lilting, petalled things of columbine and rose;  
I had rather shape a sword upon an iron anvil,  
Beating out a splendid blade with sledge-hammer blows!

Any one can fashion them, string the beads of amber,  
Dainty, dancing tripping things, of love and lips and hands;  
I would blare a trumpet with a brazen clarion,  
Till avalanching echoes break on thunder-haunted strands!

See, I thumb the yellow flax upon the twirling spindle,  
I can spin a thread of dreams to weave the cloth of gold,—  
But I would hear as Atlas bore the world upon his shoulders,  
And feel about my granite knees the wine-dark ocean rolled!



THE older a man grows the more he becomes convinced that a first-class liver is of far more value to him than a first-class conscience.



AN office-seeker and a lost dog are brothers: each wags his tail whenever he meets a man.

# THE HAWKSHAVIAN DRAMA

By George Jean Nathan

THE melodrama of our youthhood was based largely upon the theory that the most momentous crises in life occurred always in the vicinity of railroad tracks or at the foot of Pier 30, North River. The melodrama of present-day geniture is based to a similar degree upon the theory that the most important eventualities in life come off always in the vicinity of long writing tables standing in the centre of libraries in private houses and having on them a push button.

Melodrama, in short, has been moved indoors. And with this removal has departed, alas, the bulk of its erstwhile gaudy bounce, its sometime lively witcheries, its quondam naïve charm. For melodrama, surely, belongs indoors no more than a Barnum's circus belongs in Madison Square Garden or upon the stage of the Hippodrome. Melodrama, above every other mould of drama, is essentially a thing of "exteriors." Move it under a roof and into "interiors" and it becomes effeminate, maidenly—a thing to curve the spine and benumb the pulse. The current importing of an air, of a saucy politeness, into the melodrama of the days of ten and twenty and thirty, has rendered soulless that antic and favourite prank of other times, aye, has caused it for the most part to die as a distinctive, if forsooth peculiar, art form from the earth. And what has taken its place? Melodrama in name only—a species of harlequinade neither good melodrama (in the old and truest theatric sense) nor good drama. A cheap and posturing synthesis, rather, of the least gay and stimulating portions of the two plasms.

Whereas melodrama falls without the

frontiers of critical appraisal, whereas it is, very frankly, designed merely to toy in innocent manner with the blood pressure of the youngster that is a part still and ever of all of us, it follows that the only equitable estimate of melodrama is in terms of what the theatrical jargon knows as "getting over," to wit, the measure of success with which the show registers upon the audience its component parts, separately and collectively. And it is by such standard alone that comparisons are to be brought about. And it is by such standard, therefore, that we must persuade ourselves that with the possible exception of the interior melodramas of Mr. William Gillette, the third act interior of Mr. Veiller's "Within the Law" and the last act interior of "Mr. Wu" (as it was done in London), there has been not a single so-called interior melodrama unfeignedly promulgated under the designation in our more modern epoch that has bounced our little omegas off the orchestra chairs with one-hundredth the resilience imparted by the infinitely cruder exterior thrill confections of the era of "The Soudan" and "Across the Pacific," "The Span of Life" and "Burmah," "The Queen of the White Slaves" and the illustrious "Opium Ring" cycle, "The Bowery After Dark" and "Wedded and Parted," "Tracked 'Round the World" and the Lincoln J. Carter *opera*, the "Edna" and "Nellie" and "Bertha" dramaturgy of cloak models, typewriters and sewing machine girls, "The Chinatown Trunk Mystery" and "The Cherry Pickers" and "One of the Finest." . . .

In that era, too, were there of course successful exceptions to the exterior

rule—pieces in which, like "Blue Jeans" and "Nobody's Claim," the extremest perturbation was of an interior gender—but in nine cases out of ten the batteries of such papas of the period as Hal Reid, Owen Davis, Theodore Krimmer and Isaac Swift were trained upon the stall vertebræ from outdoor sets. And in the instance even of several of the exceptions, the really grand jounce of the occasion was derived from sources intrinsically somewhat exotic to an interior—the driving, for example, of a horse through a pine frame and plate-glass window, as in "Nobody's Claim."

A tear for these noble old rough-houses that are gone and yet a glad wide eye for the announcement of a newly formed circuit that promises, this season soon to come, to revive them in all their pristine splendour. No pricely Jane Cowl delivering an Harvard oration on the poor working-girl's virtue from the witness box of a "Common Clay" can ever bring half so much *l'allegra* as the twenty-five-dollar-a-week hamfatter who in "Chinatown Charlie" climbed up the backs of half a dozen other hams standing on each other's shoulders and rescued the lovely one who was being held prisoner by some malefic fellow on the top floor of an obscene *pension*. No glossy Courtenay as an Irish soldier who enlists for purposes of espionage as an officer in the German army in an "Under Fire" can bring to blush the proud moment in "The Ninety and Nine" when the brave chickie ran the express locomotive through the raging forest fire in order to save the life of the producer. And no dinner-jacketed Barrymore puncturing an officer of the law into somnolence with a hypodermic needle in a "Kick In" can ever compare with the human bridge across the yawning abyss in "The Span of Life," or the big race between the automobile and the express train to beat the villain to Denver in "Bedford's Hope," or the tunnel rescue in "After Dark," or the deep-sea divers' feat in "At the Bottom of the Sea," or the

race of the locomotive to get to the switch in "The Fast Mail," or the horse race in "The Sporting Duchess" . . .

Boys will be boys—and so will men be boys. And no Roi Megrue literature will ever satisfy them as did Tom Taylor's

Brierly (*rapidly closing trap-door on the villains and standing on it*): Now's the time! (*seizes pen and writes, reading as he does so*) "To Mr. Gibson, Peckham. The office will be entered tonight; I'm in it to save the property and secure the robbers." . . . But who will take this letter?

Hawkshaw: (*having come up unnoticed behind him*): I will!

Brierly: And who are you?

Hawkshaw: (*pulling off his whiskers*): Hawkshaw, the detective!

Those, gentlemen, were the days of true sport in the theater, the days when no heroine ever knew at the beginning who her parents were. . . .

She was one o' thet party what the Injuns massacred some fifteen years ago, jes' outside o' Deadwood. Jim happened to be along o' the boys that drived the critters off, an' he found her thar in one o' the wagons asleep.

Asleep!

Yes. Yah see, she was only a babby then an' all the racket in the world couldn't disturb her slumber.

But what become o' her folks?

Jim never could find any trace o' them. As she happened to be the only survivor, why the old man kinder took a fancy to her and decided to take her home with him, and she's been right h'yar ever since.

In the last act discovering that she was not, after all, the daughter of the rascally Dalton. . . .

Dalton: It means that this locket belonged to your mother. And there, on the inside, is her picture! (*Passes heroine the locket.*)

Heroine: My—mother! (*Looks at picture.*) And you say—she was your wife?

Dalton: Yes—she was my wife!

Heroine: Then I—I am (*looks pleadingly from kind old gentleman who has been acting as a father to her to Dalton.*)

Dalton: My—daughter!

Heroine (*firmlly*): I don't believe it! (*To kind old gentleman*) Daddy! You who have been a daddy to me so long! Say it ain't true! Say it ain't true!

. . . but none other than Miss Laura Courtlandt, heiress to the Courtlandt

millions, in whose cradle a spurious child had been placed when she was abducted at the age of three months by old Eleanor, the blackmailing nurse.

Those, as I say, my friends, were high days in the playhouse. Where now in the moment's more modish melo-piece the paradise of such a thrill as churned our fifteen-year-old hæmoglobin when the proud Lady Audley, forefinger to brow, pondered so: "Once was I fool enough to wed for love. Now I have married for wealth. What a change from the wife of George Talboys to the wife of Sir Michael Audley! My fool of a first husband thinks me dead. Oh excellent scheme, oh cunning device, how well you have served me! Where can he be now? Still in India, no doubt! Ha, ha, ha! Why I have only just begun to live—to taste the sweets of wealth and power. If I am dead to George Talboys, he is dead to me. Yes, I am well rid of him, and on this earth we meet no more!" And when, in the midst of the haughty jade's meditations, we beheld George himself stealing noiselessly up from the rear, at the "meet no more" flicking the Lady upon the shoulder with a triumphant "Yes, my proud beauty, we do!"

There was a moment for you! There was no missing of it. Nor that other moment in the Western blood-and-thunder libretto of name forgotten, where noble old Uncle Dave and the detestable Earl of Ramsey bantered thuswise:

The Earl: You Americans are a sanguine lot of people.

Uncle Dave: Oh, I see! You're an Englishman, ain't you? They never kin believe how fast we grow in this country. They won't believe that George Washington ever made 'em get out of it either, but he did!

The Earl: Ah, my dear fellow, *our* country has grown up! You get emigrants to help build up *your* country—but what are they?

Uncle Dave: That's so; they don't amount to nothing until they come here and inhale the free and fresh air of liberty. Then they become American citizens and they amount

to a great deal. Fer we build up the West and feed the world.

The Earl: Feed the world! Oh, no! Certainly not England.

Uncle Dave: Oh, yes, we do! We've fed England. We gave you a warm breakfast in 1776, a boiling dinner in 1812, and we got a red-hot supper waitin' for you any time you want it!

Nor still that other moment at the end where Uncle Dave, facing the Earl, shouted: "These papers were stole from me and the estates were secured—by *you*!" With the Earl's snicker "Ha, and who is an idiot enough to believe such a story." With Pietro Spaghetti, the erstwhile dago comedian, stepping forward and exclaiming, "I am! I am a fool enough to believe it! I am also a fool enough to believe that one Jack Mayburn, alias the Earl of Ramsey, is wanted in Michigan for killing a keeper to escape from jail. I am a fool enough to believe Ramsey is wanted for murder, robbery, train wrecking, arson, kidnapping, embezzling, counterfeiting, burglary and safe-breaking!" With the Earl's "You Italian dog, what do you mean? Curses on you,—who are you?" And with Pietro's removal of his mustache and imperial, and exclamation: "*Bob Brenham, United States detective, at your service!*"

But was this all? Was the litterateur of that happy day content, as now, at this juncture to rest his typewriter? Not on your life. "Here's my warrant," continued the United States detective, "and here (*producing a revolver*) is my persuader!"

Imagine the picture, all you who still have a soul! Then recall the heroine's "Oh, Bob! Bob, is it you? (*embracing him.*) And to think I didn't know you!" And recall how the villainous Earl, taking advantage of the United States detective's temporary abstraction, with the words "One dash now for liberty!" sought to escape R. U. E. and found himself confronted at that point of egress by Otto Snitzpooner-kooker, the erstwhile Dutch *comique*, with a gun. "No you doan'dt!" (we remember Otto's words as if they were



spoken, ah, but yesterday), "no you doan't. I'm a Cherman detective in der employ of Bob Brenham—ha, ha, ha!" And recall how now the evil Earl turned and dashed for the left upper entrance where he was stopped, also at the nozzle of a gun, by Gee Ho, the erstwhile Chinese pantaloons, with the grinned "Not muchee, you vellie bad man. This pistol, he will hurta like hellie. (*Dropping dialect*) I am a Chinese detective also in the employ of Bob Brenham!"

One grows warm yet at the mere recollection. What, indeed, if certain flaws appeared in the logic or certain discrepancies with a bland conspicuity in the coincidences? The old, strict and authentic definition of melodrama (from the Greek meaning song plus action) has ebbed long since. The word has taken on, these years gone, another and less exact theatrical translation.

Melodrama is to drama as musical comedy is to grand opera. And melodrama and musical comedy have much in common. Each holds the back of the mirror up to nature. In its bottom sense, in good sooth, what is melodrama but musical comedy played with a straight face? Substitute Willard Mack for Frank Daniels in "The Idol's Eye" and you have a Wilkie Collins thriller. Substitute Douglas Fairbanks for Raymond Hitchcock in "The Red Widow" and you have back your basic tale of Russian intrigue and adventure. Or, on the other hand, to test the rule, substitute Mr. Hitchcock for Mr. Fairbanks in "Hawthorne of the U. S. A.," and you have musical comedy. The dividing line 'twixt the two forms is of a hair's breadth. Henry Blossom might make a serviceable libretto out of "Under Fire" without altering more than a line or two. And Augustus Thomas might without much more difficulty make a serviceable melodrama out of "Eva" or "Royalty Dances Waltzes" or "The Waltz Dream" or "The Purple Road" or "Little Johnny Jones" . . . George Cohan's musical comedies, indeed, are

already but Harry Clay Blaney melodramas embellished with Harrigan and Hart melodies.

The old melodramas, much like a country girl, intrigued even the wearied and sophisticated by virtue of their frank crudeness, their charming lack of literary lip rouge and nose powder. Yet, just so, were their banalities at which now the superior sniff, quite so cheap and so raw as some profess to bethink? If it was always Christmas Eve in prison scenes in the old ten-twenty-thirty, is it not Christmas Eve, too, in the prison of John Galsworthy's "Justice"? If we snicker at Lady Audley's "Let me pass!", at Robert Audley's "Never! The law shall have its own!", at the Lady's "And who is to be my accuser?" and at the brazenly opportune entrance at this juncture of Luke Marks (who was supposed to be dead) with his "I am!"—if we lift a nostril at such nick-of-time materializations in left upper entrances, let us remind ourselves, too, that they are not entirely foreign to the drama of such as Tolstoi and Hauptmann. Where the great difference between the cross-examination of C. H. Hazlewood's woman with a past and the cross-examination of Henry Arthur Jones's Mrs. Dane? Where the diminution of the obvious in the gay gallant spraying himself with eau-de-cologne in the third act of "The Great Lover" and with Green Jones spraying himself with eau-de-cologne in the third act of "The Ticket-of-Leave Man"? Compare "The Lion and the Mouse" with "The Power of Money." Compare "The Earth" with "The Power of the Press." Compare "The Lure" with "The Queen of the White Slaves" or "The Queen of the Highbinders."

I miss them, the old "You are my son"—"So you are the man who wrecked my mother's life" miracle plays. Like the little girls in pigtailed and the heart-shaped white peppermint candies with red cinnamon mottoes and the telephones fashioned out of an old baking-powder can and a piece of resined string and the baseballs made by



wrapping twine around an ink eraser, they are gone but not forgotten. And nothing like them, no fancy imitations, however improved, have seemed or probably ever will seem quite the same. Theodore Kremer died with Santa Claus.

And so, on behalf of the eternal youngster the nation over, I make a plea for the return to us of our old beloved gun and gore plays. We want again to see the Brooklyn Bridge by moonlight. We want back the railroad station on the Northern Pacific and the old sawmill (first the exterior, then the interior) and the Tombs Police Court, and Joe Morgan shouting, "Villain, your career of landlord shall be short; for here I swear, by the side of my murdered child, you shall die the death of a dog!"—with the professor at the piano manufacturing quiver music. We want again to see the villain stealthily scull his boat up to the end of the dock at midnight with the sotto voce warning to his foul partner in crime, "I pulled down the river for a spell to throw any spies off the track. It was necessary after what you told me about the girl's threat to blab about the Boston pier." And to give ear to Villain II's "We must get her out of the city!" and Villain I's "Do you think she'll go easy, or shall we drug her?" and Villain II's "Just tell her it's to meet her beau, or give her some such reason and she'll be as mild as a lamb," and then Villain I's "Ha! Just let me get hold of her and I'll answer she goes, reason or no reason!"

We want, just once more before we shuffle off, to see the hero fastened by the villain to the railroad tracks—"And now, my fine fellow, I'm going to put you to bed. You won't toss much, either. In less than ten minutes you'll be sound asleep. There, how do you like it? You'll get down to the Junction before me, will you, Ralph Beaumont? You dog me and play the eavesdropper, eh? Now do it if you can! When you hear the thunder of the fast mail under your head and see the engine lights dancing in your eyes

and feel the iron wheels a foot from your neck, remember me, Clifford Romaine!" Then we want just once more to hear the express train whistling in the distance and coming nearer, nearer, with the heroine battering at the door of the shed in which the villain has locked her—"God help me! And I cannot aid you!"—and the hero, though gagged, yet shouting the noble sentiments, "Never mind me, sweetheart mine. I might as well die now as any other time. I'm not afraid. I've seen death in almost every shape and none of them scares me. Remember me, sweetheart; treasure my memory, beloved, and I die happy." And, if we seem not too greedy, we would beseech then one last view of the heroine banging down the door with an axe and rescuing our Ralph just as the train of pasteboard cars, amid loud bell-ringing and tooting and off-stage pounding on wash-pans, is pulled across the stage by a plainly visible rope in the hands of an equally visible Hibernian stagehand standing half way out of the first entrance.

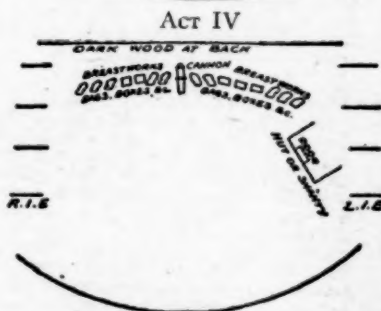
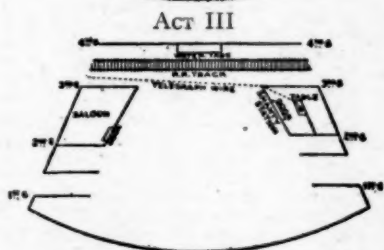
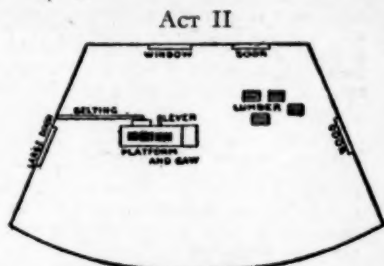
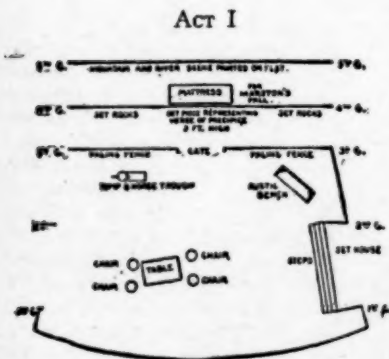
We want to see the hero "plied with drink" and to hear someone talk about tarnishing proud escutcheons and to hear the villain denounced as a darned skunk and to hear one character say "Look at me, Clayborne—scan my features closely and tell me have you ever seen me before?" and to see the other fellow start back with a "What! You—Henry Mayfield? Not dead!" No costly mummer, Prince Albert and gardenia'd like an expensive barber and gravely grunting specimens endorsed by Professor George Pierce Baker, can tickle us as we used in the old shirt-sleeve days be tickled when the rich villain breathed in the poor heroine's ear, "You can be a lady! Don't go, but listen to me for a moment! I can make a lady of you—a fine lady—you shall be dressed like a queen and move in society, loved, honored, and famous. This—all this—I offer you if you will but become my wife," and when then the spunky colleen turned upon the presumptuous fel-

low with a "Your wife! Not if all the gold of the world were in your hands, and you gave it to me. Your wife! Never—never—not even to become a lady! Before I'd be your wife I'd live in rags and be proud of my poverty!"

But the day of designating villains as varmints and of "unfolding" plots, of "I have only one answer for such curs as you—*this!*" (bingo) and of "At last I have you within me power" is gone, alas,—and maybe forever. Harvard College and the actor, between them, have done the trick. Harvard has spoiled the old melo-pieces by squirting into them pseudo economic and social problems, by affectedly unsplitting their infinitives and by treating them, in general, to a dosage of sophomore fine writing. And the actor has done his share by spouting the result with the gravity of an Ibsen elocutionist.

The humour of the old plays, their passion and their sauce—the crème-de-la-Krémer, if the tawdry jest be overlooked—have vanished. And with the humour and the passion and the sauce there have trickled away, too, the old plays' chic scenic juices and beamy properties.

Twenty years ago, the scene plot for any upright, respectable four-act melo-drama looked like this:



To-day, the whole play is pulled off in a tame interior or two! Bookcases are now where once were railroad tracks. A mahogany escritoire stands now where once buzzed sawmills.

And the list of properties, or "props," In the old days, even for a measly little three-acter, in small part:

#### ACT I

Small rifle for soubrette lead. Revolvers and carbines for juvenile lead and leading heavy. Dagger for character heavy. Rifle for character lead. Wire across stage to be dropped when telephone wires are cut down. Small telegraph instrument. Bludgeon for leading heavy. Blackjack for Irish comedy. Slug-shot for negro comedy. Bag of nuggets and money-belt for juvenile lead. Brass knuckles for second heavy. Red fire and

flash-torch for fire effect. Key to lock door. Axe. Thin boards to make door to be battered in by axe. Half pail of water behind water-tank to come through piping at climax. Brace of pistols and rope for female juvenile lead. . . .

## ACT I.

Ropes, boat-hook and axe for juvenile lead and second juvenile. Bolt to attach to door. Poniard for third heavy. Revolver for utility and "billy" for soubrette lead. Smoke pots. Gong bell. Life-preserver and large crab. Fire-net. Imitation of crying baby and nursing bottle with milk for eccentric character woman. Package of documents. Wallet. Six packages of stage money. Circular saw. Machinery connected with saw. Revolver for juvenile lead. Two sticks nailed together to make a loud noise when used to strike with: one for Jew comedy, one for Chinese comedy. A chicken and an egg for negro comedy. Skyrocket. Two stuffed clubs. Bottle marked "chloroform." Kerosene lamp made so it can be upset and smashed. Keg marked "dynamite" and fuse. Wind machine and storm effects. Italian disguise for juvenile lead. Chair with legs sawed half-way through so they will break readily when crashed on leading heavy's back. Hook-and-ladder truck. Steam fire-engine. . . .

## ACT III

Brace of pistols for juvenile lead. Revolver and quirt for leading heavy. Musket for female juvenile lead. Mining implements. Wine and beer glasses, cigars. Peddler's disguise for juvenile lead. Dice and dice-box. Pack of playing cards containing five aces. Searchlight. Two bloodhounds. Stiletto for female heavy. Trick bottle to break. Clasp-knife and gag for second heavy. Window panes covered with isinglass; box of glass to make noise when window is broken. Two imitation bricks for Irish comedy. Long rope with noose. Ambulance gong. Warrant and revolvers for juvenile lead. Colored fire. Gun and handcuffs for second juvenile. American flag. . . .

To-day, a solitary revolver (unloaded) and a writing desk set from Brentano's!

Mincing equivocate has spread its pall over the boards where once Harold Tremaine, the bare-bosomed, brawny-armed magnifico, struck an attitude and, covering the low hound of the theme with a gun, boomed thus the curtain down: "Stand whar yah are, Jake Dalton, or I'll shove daylight clean through yah!" And the love scenes aren't as they used to be. For no more, alas, does the little Rocky Mountain flower implore the manly hero in the

prospector's outfit (in reality, the Earl of Sutherland, incog.) to "tell me 'bout that thar big city whar yah come from"; and no more, alas, does the hero retort, "I much prefer to speak of the glorious West—and of you"; and no more, after the little one's surprised "Gee whiz! What yar see 'bout me to talk 'bout?" do we hear the "Little girl, you are the brightest gem in the whole range of these mountains. When I came out here eight months ago to bury myself in the wilds of nature—and forget—little did I dream that amid these canyons and primeval forests I should discover so fair a bud growing wild within the confines of the rugged peaks! Of what interest is the crowded, stifled city to you? To you, a mountain maid, whose home is the finest garden in nature's paradise?" . . .

And no longer does the persecuted heroine, in response to the "Then, what will you do?" retort with, "What thousands of other heartbroken and despairing women have done—seek for peace in the silence of the grave!"

And no longer, as we have lamented, are the poor heroines doubtful of their origins—"You ask who my parents were? I don't know. The furthest back that I can recollect is when I was seven years old I was with an old one-eyed woman who was nicknamed 'The Owl'—she made me sell flowers at the corner of the streets and sometimes I had to beg, for if I did not bring home ten sous at least, she used to beat me instead of giving me my supper. One day, I fled from the house. I have earned a wretched livelihood by singing ballads in the great streets—I have associated with characters the worst and most depraved. Still I have never stolen and have never forgotten that there is a Heaven above (*kneels*) ever watching over our acts and ever ready to administer comfort and happiness to the afflicted and deserving." . . .

No more are these, our old friends, the boon comrades of our nonage, with us. And a sadder, albeit a more knowing, world it is, believe me, for their going.

# PORTRAIT OF A TRAGIC COMEDIAN

By H. L. Mencken

## I

THE preface to Frank Harris' two-volume biography of Oscar Wilde bears date of 1910, and on the title page the author appears as his own publisher, and even as his own printer. A curious proof of the potency of prudery in the Anglo-Saxon countries! For six years, it would seem, this highly dramatic and significant story of a first-rate artist's rise and fall has been seeking a publisher on both sides of the Atlantic, and now at last, despite the dignified position of the author and his obvious competence to write such a book with discretion and understanding, he is forced to print it privately and from a house in Washington Square! Strange tales go about of its adventures in New York. One publisher, after others had failed, accepted it and had it set up—but when he submitted the sheets to those who have authority in such matters he was warned that its publication would land him in jail. He thereupon had the work revised, and with all passages taken out that could reasonably offer offense to even the most prudish, it was submitted again. He was then plainly given to understand that its publication in any form would expose him to prosecution, and so he was forced to abandon it. Harris himself seems to look forward to some sort of Puritan attack, and in preparation for it rehearses the reasons which moved him to write and print the book—his long and intimate friendship with Wilde; the importance of the man, not only as an individual artist, but also as an influence in English letters; the palpable inaccuracy and inadequacy of the existing studies of

him; the need of a simple and truthful account of his grotesque mock trials in the English courts; the growth of a huge body of fantastic fables about him, and particularly about his last days; the sound principle that even the worst of offenders deserves to have his case presented by one who is not his sworn foe. He might have added, in further defense of his boldness, his own unusual charm as a writer, for his book is not only the most comprehensive and informative volume on Wilde that has yet appeared, but also, and by long odds, the most skillfully written. It is, indeed, an excellent biography, intimate, sympathetic and yet rigidly honest, and whatever its theoretical shortcomings in moral eyes it at least stands up as a piece of writing.

And why have the publishers been so reluctant to publish it, and the guardians of the public rectitude so eager to suppress it? For the life of me I can't make out. Saving one chapter, I can find nothing in it to lift the eyebrow of any sane adult, and even there Harris does no more than allow Wilde to say a few words (they are empty and unconvincing enough, surely) in his own cause. The truth is told, but it is told cleanly, reticently, with due reserve. I myself, after having read every word of the two volumes, come away in complete ignorance of the precise act for which Wilde was condemned to such barbaric tortures in prison. It may have been one thing, or it may have been some other and quite different thing—both disgusting enough, in all conscience, but neither a penal offense in most civilized countries, and neither so rare in our own land that we can afford to go



through any hocus-pocus of holy horror. In my native State, not six months ago, the leader of the vice crusade, a Methodist clergyman in high standing, was taken in such *schweinerei* in the central lamasery of the Young Men's Christian Association, and had to be spirited out of the jurisdiction by his fellow apostles of purity. But when the newspapers, scenting a smutty trial, set up a demand for his indictment and extradition, it was found, to everyone's astonishment, that the offense of which he was accused was not indictable, and so the State Legislature rushed through a special prohibitory act, that the recreant clergy and laity might be better handled hereafter. It was for this indecency, or for something substantially equivalent to it, that Wilde was given two years in solitary confinement, and one long year of it without books, without writing implements, without decent medical attention, and even without sufficient food. It is Harris' offense, if he has committed any offense, that he went to Wilde's rescue when the burdens of his punishment grew maddening and intolerable, that he helped him through the cruel difficulties of the years following his release, and that he now puts himself into jeopardy to tell the man's story as he knows it, carefully and completely, concealing nothing that is salient and significant, and yet making no cheap show of what is merely nasty.

That story, I need scarcely say, is anything but edifying. One rises from it, indeed, with the impression that the misdemeanor which caused Wilde's actual downfall was quite the least of his onslaughts upon the decencies—that he was of vastly more ardor and fluency as a cad and a poltroon than ever he became as an immoralist. No offense against what the average civilized man regards as proper and seemly conduct is missing from the chronicle. Wilde was a fop and a snob, a toady and a social pusher, a coward and an ingrate, a glutton and a grafter, a plagiarist and a mountebank; he was jealous alike of his superiors and of his

inferiors; he was so spineless that he fell an instant victim to every new flatterer; he had no sense whatever of monetary obligation or even of the commonest duties of friendship; he lied incessantly to those who showed him most kindness, and tried to rob some of them; he seems never to have forgotten a slight or remembered a favor; he was as devoid of any notion of honor as a candidate for office; the moving spring of his whole life was a silly and obnoxious vanity. It is almost impossible to imagine a fellow of less ingratiating character, and to these endless defects he added a physical body that was gross and repugnant, but through it all ran an incomparable charm of personality, and supporting and increasing that charm was his undoubted genius. Harris pauses more than once to hymn his capacity for engaging the fancy. He was a veritable specialist in the amenities, a dinner companion *sans pair*, the greatest of English wits since Congreve, the most delightful of talkers, an artist to his finger-tips, the prophet of a new and lordlier æsthetic, the complete antithesis of English stodginess and stupidity. Born out of his time, as he himself was fond of saying, he was even more an exile from his true country. The London of the eighties was as immovably hostile to such a man as the Germany of the seventies was to Nietzsche. It could see him only as an extravagant buffoon, a preacher of the fantastic and dubious, one to be regarded with a wary eye; and so it was very quick, in the old, old Puritan way, to explain his strangeness in terms of villainy, and to fall upon him, once the chance offered, with an enthusiasm almost religious. Wilde was guilty without a doubt; we have, indeed, his plain confession in this book; but all the same he was not tried but lynched, and no gabble about substantial justice will ever rub out that discreditable fact.

Harris tells us that he was personally convinced of Wilde's innocence until after the first trial. It is the hardest thing in the book to believe, for surely



no one else in the London of that day labored under any such delusion, and Harris himself mentions many anterior circumstances that gave him suspicion. The point, however, is scarcely worth making. The important thing is the light that the confession threw upon Wilde's character. Harris had already advised him to flee to France, knowing full well the impossibility of breasting a high tide of Puritan indignation; he now renewed his arguments with all the persuasiveness he could muster, for he saw clearly that, at the second trial, Wilde would fall an easy victim to the prosecution's lawyers, and that the jury's disagreement in the first trial would not be repeated. In order to facilitate the proposed escape (Wilde was out on bail), he borrowed a steam yacht from a friend, and anchored it with steam up at Erith on the lower Thames. More, he had a carriage in waiting, and made arrangements which practically amounted to official connivance. But Wilde could never get up sufficient courage for the enterprise. Once he was actually in the carriage, but at the last moment an astounding cowardice seized him, and he demanded to be taken to his brother's house. "I would as soon take you to prison!" exclaimed Harris. But Oscar stood to his decision. His mood was one of utter inertia; he preferred waiting and doing nothing to the easy way to freedom. Later on, Harris tackled him again, but with equal lack of success. Fear had reduced him to a pitiable state, indeed; he could do nothing save bury his head in the sand; the days of his trial and conviction, and even the first days of his penal servitude, passed over him as in a dream; it would be difficult to imagine a picture of more pathetic weakness.

The story of Wilde's two trials and of the cruelties rained upon him in prison give a serious shaking up to all our old notions of English justice and decency. Both trials were tragic farces. Notorious rogues and blackmailers were admitted as witnesses, a half-witted young man was solemnly

put upon the stand, and the newspapers inflamed the jury with extraordinary denunciations of the accused, many of them, as Harris shows, inspired by persons as guilty as the prisoner. Notwithstanding all this clamour for his blood, the first jury disagreed. But the second was more responsive to opinion, and so Wilde was railroaded to prison. On the day after his sentence forty well-known men about town sat down to a public banquet in celebration of the event—"a feast," as Harris says, "to celebrate the ruin and degradation of a man of genius." The leading spirit in this great moral banquet was Charles Brookfield, the present English censor of plays. Brookfield was the author of "Dear Old Charlie," the most indecent comedy seen on the London boards in years. But he constituted himself the unofficial prosecutor of Wilde, and gathered the highly dubious evidence on which he was convicted. Later on, when Brookfield was rewarded with the censor's post for his high services to public morality, some humorous London manager revived "Dear Old Charlie," and it had a hilarious run. The piece had been licensed by Brookfield's predecessor, and he was unable, under the law, to withdraw the license. But poor Wilde was dead before ever this last act of the tragic farce was played out.

Despite the fact that a Royal Commission had already protested against the penalty as barbarous and unreasonable, Wilde was condemned to two years' penal servitude, and the first of them was spent in what was virtually solitary confinement. The prison food was revolting and insufficient; silence was enforced by severe punishments; the prisoner was forbidden to read or to write. His health broke down under this drastic régime and he lost forty pounds in weight; but the governor of the prison and the prison doctor refused him any relief. Harris, meanwhile, was in South Africa. On his return he visited Wilde, and then lodged a protest with Sir Ruggles Brise, the head of the Prison Commis-

sion. Brise turned out to be a humane man, and at once ordered a relaxation of the killing discipline. Wilde was given pen, ink and paper, and soon began work on "De Profundis." Brise went still further. He told Harris that he was in favor of reducing Wilde's sentence, and that he would urge the Home Secretary to reduce it if it were not for fear of Puritan objections in Parliament. To meet this situation Harris suggested that a petition be prepared, signed by the leading authors of England. Brise jumped at the suggestion, and proposed George Meredith as the first signer. But when Harris approached Meredith the latter curtly refused. So did Professor Churton Collins. So, it appears, did Swinburne. Harris went from door to door. He found them all closed against him. There was no Christian charity on tap in England. Worse, there was no courage. Most of these magnificoes based their refusal frankly on the ground that it would be dangerous to hold out a hand to Wilde, with the state of public opinion what it was. Harris himself and Professor Tyrrell, of Trinity College, Dublin, seem to have been the only ones with valour enough to face that storm—not forgetting the Rev. Stewart Headlam, "who was an English clergyman, and yet, wonder of wonders, a Christian."

So Wilde served his two years, not escaping a single day. Once he was released the Puritan rage against him revived, and he went to France. Had he been given, in those days, a helping hand, it is highly probable that he would have pulled himself together and spent the rest of his life in diligent and valuable work. To a few relatively happy months of this period, indeed, belong his best writings—"The Ballad of Reading Gaol" and parts of "De Profundis." But what he actually got, save from a few faithful friends, was contumely of an unmeasured and almost unbelievable sort; he was firmly lodged in the Puritan val-halla of devils, and no extravagance of hatred was too much for him. The

result was that, after a gallant new start, he slipped back into his old associations, and presently he was living in squalid idleness in Paris, drunken, dirty and indecent. It was then that all the worst weaknesses of the man came out. He borrowed money right and left, wasted his days in filthy debauchery, and played ingrate and traitor to his best friends. The experience of Harris was perhaps typical. During his Paris days Wilde devised an excellent scene for a play, but found himself unable to complete it. He proposed to Harris that they collaborate on it, and after long negotiations, during which Wilde's unfitness of the task became manifest, Harris ended by buying the idea from him for £50. The money paid, Harris went back to London, completed the play—it was called "Mr. and Mrs. Daventry"—and sold it to Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Wilde, hearing of this, now demanded more money, and Harris, to pacify him, gave him another £50. But the worst was to come. The moment the play was announced, various actors and actresses came forward with the claim that Wilde had sold his idea to them, and investigation showed that he had actually done so, and on a large scale. Mrs. Brown Potter, Beerbohm Tree, George Alexander and Ada Rehan were among these claimants; some had paid Wilde as much as £100. Worse still, he acknowledged the swindle without shame, and even denounced Harris for depriving him of "a certain income"!

After this curious episode he went downhill rapidly, and was soon quite unable to do any work at all. His sole means of support was the charity of his friends, and to the business of wheedling money out of them he devoted all of his surviving energies. The end that now rapidly approached was of a sort to delight the Puritan heart. Wilde had suffered a fall in prison and one of its results was an abscess of the ear. In addition, he was in the last stages of chronic alcoholism, and beside, was victim to an unmentionable disease, the product of his vices. He

died in a little hotel in a by-street, with only two friends, Robert Ross and Reginald Turner, at his side. The death-bed scenes were full of horror; he seemed doomed to go out of life in abominable filthiness. The body was buried in quicklime, like that of the hanged man in "The Ballad of Reading Gaol." Years later Ross went to Paris with Wilde's son to have it reinterred in Père Lachaise. When it was dug up it was found that the quicklime had failed to act; the features were still recognizable. "At once Ross sent the son away, and when the sextons were about to use their shovels, he ordered them to desist, and descending into the grave, moved the body with his own hands into the new coffin in loving reverence."

So much for the life and death of Oscar Wilde. Harris gives no space to a criticism of his books, and I follow his example. Thanks to the labors of Ross, they are now to be had in an excellent complete edition of fourteen volumes. Innumerable other editions exist (some of them boldly pirated), but that of Ross is better than all the rest. Much that is hollow and feeble is in those fourteen volumes—epigrams that strain and creak, poems that are all a brittle sounding, an æsthetic theory that floats upon the surface and is chiefly borrowed to boot. But there are other things, and rare and precious things—the best wit that England has produced since the Restoration, three or four incomparably amusing plays, the noblest ballad in English, some essays that have left their mark, a story or two of the first rank, an endless stream of good writing. Wilde, beyond all things, was a stylist, and perhaps the greatest of his time. His epigrams may lose their tang, his plays may go out of fashion, even "De Profundis" and "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" may cease to move, but so long as there is an art in our resilient and glowing English speech, he will live as one who knew pre-eminently how to use it. The charm of his style is in the very least of his wri-

tings—his squibs, the speeches in his plays, his letters to the newspapers. He could no more put words together without making music than he could face a temptation without yielding to it. Our depressing Puritan philosophy is against such men. It distrusts the artist with a great distrust; it sees in him a prophet of that innocent gusto, that pagan joy in life, which is its chief abomination; it is always ecstatically eager to discover him a criminal, and to fall upon him with the utmost rigors of its savage justice. Wilde was in the wrong country and the wrong time. The Irishman of genius should not go to England, but to France.

Harris, as I say, has done a good job in this life of his friend, no matter how much specialists in righteousness may belabor it with incomprehensible oburgations. He has told the truth about Wilde's stupendous weaknesses, but he has also managed to convey some understanding of the man's unquenchable attractiveness. There was never another quite like Oscar. His very grotesqueries somehow brought him friends, and not all his rogueries and indecencies could ever drive them away. "One can be sure," says Harris, speaking of Ross' last services, "that the man who won such fervid self-denying tenderness, had deserved it, called it forth by charm of companionship, or magic of loving intercourse." Harris' book is yet another proof. It is a grim and unsentimentalized record, but there is shot through it the enchantment of a personality that, after all, must have had something fine and inspiring in it—of a man who, for all his vileness, was at least far better than the Pecksniffs who tore him to pieces.

## II

AN era of pamphlets seems to be upon us, with the war diligently helping its advent. Scarcely a day passes that I do not receive three or four. Usually, true enough, they are set up in large type and palmed off upon the

public as books, but this is merely one more count in the indictment of publishers. Covers or no covers, they yet remain pamphlets, and some day some miraculously intelligent publisher will see the advantage of putting them out in paper and at twenty-five cents, and so cabbage a lot of dollars. The causes of this late flowering of an old plant are not far to seek. The newspapers, falling more and more into the hands of mere stockjobbers and shopmen, have sunk to such an abyss of imbecility that nothing approaching an intelligible discussion of public problems is visible in their columns. The days when a Hamilton, a Madison or a Jay turned to them is long past; they no longer invite the man who has anything worth hearing to say; their sages and soothsayers are such empty platitudinarians as Dr. Frank Crane, Edwin Markham, Arthur Brisbane and Herbert Kaufman. Turn to the best of them and you will see plainly what a falling off there has been since the heroic age. The discussion of great questions, even in such pretentious gazettes as the *Boston Transcript*, the *New York Evening Post* and the *Philadelphia Ledger*, seldom arises above the level of a lecture by a fresh-water college professor; they are almost incredibly ill-informed and as unbrokeably sophomoric and humorless; two-thirds of them are even written in school-boy English. The *New York Sun* (God rest its soul!) offers a measure of the decline. Imagine the journal made great by Charles A. Dana in the hands of Frank A. Munsey, author of "Afloat in a Great City," "The Boy Broker" and "The Boy Pirates of the Hudson"!

Hence the pamphlet. Hence, too, such phenomena as the *New Republic*, a gallant effort but lacking the requisite of brains. All of the *New Republic* young men are pamphleteers, and as undergraduates go, some of them are not bad ones. I reach into the pile and draw forth a work that, if it hasn't actually appeared in those virtuous pages, at least smells of them

sweetly. Its title is "Reclaiming the Ballot," and its author is Ward Macauley (*Duffield*). What seminary this Mr. Macauley adorns I do not know, but the ardour of Politics IV is still plainly in him, and if he doesn't really get very far beyond the newspaper editorial writers in his ideas, he at least writes much better English. His theory is that the ballot is the palladium of our liberties, but that we have fatuously permitted birds of evil plumage to roost upon it, thus besmirching its façade. To save it, he proposes that we abandon the custom of voting in saloons, barber-shops and harness-stores, and erect "a permanent building, properly equipped for the important work to be undertaken," in each "election precinct." This building, he says, would at once become a center of neighborhood discussion and righteousness. There proposed laws would be threshed out by the communal Bryans and Hampdens. There recreant aldermen would be called sternly to account. There the uplift would be pumped up perennially. There the gentry and commonalty of the parish would meet on election night to witness in person the counting of the ballots.

Alas, for Dr. Macauley: I greatly fear that his Remedy must be ranked with all the other sweet perunas—the Initiative, the Referendum, the Recall, the Short Ballot, the City Manager, the Voting Machine, etc., etc. Let him go out in the world a bit and he will lose his faith in Sure Cures. There is, in fact, only one way to get good government, or even reasonably decent government, under a democracy, and that is to get rid of the democracy. The mob man is never going to be purged of his weaknesses by shortening or lengthening his ballot, or by giving him new clubs over legislators and judges, or by erecting fantastic temples to Demos on the corners now occupied so comfortably by seductive kaifs. Let those temples be ever so high, he would still steer clear of them when honest men saw the air in them, and still pack them to the doors when their



pulpits were held by mountebanks. He has, in fact, an incurable liking for such performers, and for the rogues who exploit and debauch him no less. It would give him no joy to see the corruptible put on incorruption; it would take away his hopes; he would see a career shut its doors to him. Nay, let us have done with this madness of trying to cure the evils of mob rule with more mob rule—of dosing the patient endlessly out of the very jug that brought him his horrendous snakes. The one way to get men of truth and honor into public office is to restrict the ballot to those citizens who know what truth and honor are. The cure for democracy is not more democracy, but a dashed sight less democracy. . . . Behold, I myself preach a peruna. I, too, have a sovereign balm. Well, why not? I am an American, and hence a believer in perunas. Say what you will against me and mine, you must at least grant that I offer it free of charge—that I do not bellow for reform, as it were, with one lung and pant for a job with the other.

### III

A KIND lady in Syracuse, N. Y., favors me with the suggestion that these monthly discourses would be of more spiritual benefit to the extant illuminati and of greater delight to posterity if I gave over the reviewing of current books and devoted my space to the consideration of the higher and most lasting problems of literature. The notion intrigues me; it promises less work and a greater elbow-room. Nothing could be more fatiguing and dispiriting, indeed, than the business of reading such stuff as now commonly goes for beautiful letters in America. The passing fiction grows worse and worse, and the so-called serious books are marked more and more by a hollow platitudinousness. No decent biography has been printed in the United States for five years. Before the war, though the native novels were

chiefly very bad, there were at least a few decent English reprints every month, but now all of the English novelists save one or two have gone to pot, and the current work of such men as Bennett and Wells is of more interest to the psychologist than to the critic. Why wade through such drivel? Why waste time reading it and writing about it when there are so many more appetizing fish to fry? The Syracuse blue-stocking asks the question, and I echo it as in duty bound. What is the pleasure of the sodality? Let me hear your voices, ladies and gentlemen. I shall be bound by the majority vote.

Many sapient and uplifting articles suggest themselves. For one thing, I'd like to do, some day before I am embalmed, a full-length dissertation upon "Huckleberry Finn," pointing out the qualities which rank it with "Don Quixote," "Tom Jones" and the comedies of Molière. For another thing, it would divert me to tell the whole truth (its first time in print) about the late August Strindberg, the Swedish Dowie. Again, I think I could amuse myself profitably with a treatise upon the stealings from Nietzsche in latter-day American literature, beginning with "The Strenuous Life." Yet again, there is the pleasant job of doing homage to George Ade, undoubtedly the greatest of American humorists next to Mark Twain. Yet again, a review of the American newspaper reviewers, with specimens of their handiwork, would probably startle the judicious. Yet again, there is room for a formal article on the poetry of Lizette Woodworth Reese, whose one sonnet, "Tears," is worth all the doggerel written by gifted Harvard boys since Vol. 1, No. 1, of the *Transcript*. Yet again, there is a scientific inquiry into the total absence of anything approaching a civilized literature south of the Potomac River. Yet again—but it would be easy to make a list a foot long. I slip in an article on the literature of the New Thought, and retire to the ante-chamber. Let the voice of the constituency be the voice of God.